

**THE RETURN
OF
THE ROSE**

December 2005 – March 2009

**INDIAD
PART 1 – south India**

Dec 2005 – Feb 2006

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NOW THAT I AM TWENTY NINE

Now the landlords shouted, "*Sup up!*" at some jam night down Camden
Time has come for me to sum up some cool stuff which I have done;
I have had a hundred ladies, & some of 'em together,
Played football round the counties proudly for my Lancashire,
I have done what's necessary, composed poesy midst Bombay,
Trudged through muddy Glastonbury off my nut to see Brown play,
I have master'd Fare Evasion, troubadour'd through all my crimes
(Except for one 'boitelle du vin' they reported in the Times),*
I have cream'd my pants at Wembley, been a champion at chess,
Dodg'd workplace prison misery, nigh six years now free from stress,
I have writ a wicked album, formed a company of kings,
Chased romantic ghosts through Belgium, these & many other things,
For I'm flush with understanding all theses manias of mine,
With a spirit so demanding now that I am Twenty Nine.

* September 15th 2000

MY CONTREE AS I AM DEPARTED

England! forest of the sex-obsess'd West,
Still tax'd to the hilt, still chilly, still stress'd,
Moaning through wintertime's epic bummer,
Willing on another Big Brother summer,
Pop Idols have fifteen minutes of Fame,
& every song still sounds the fucking same,
& everyone's chain'd to their mobile phone
With their hard-slaved wage in a weekend blown;
Four pills for a tenner & ten for twenty
Three quid for a beer, pints of milk forty pee
& Tony Blair putting on a sycophantic front
For George Bush (is that another name for cunt?)
Who's dragged us off to war, some 51st state
But still, my friends, still Britain, still great

ROMANTIC LIASONS

Twas a quintessential English evening
All about town & the capital's core,
On my arm a wonderful flutterling
A perfect way to start a foreign tour.

We met in a wine-bar off Trafalgar
To delve within a cosy eaterie,
Then took our places at the theatre
With Dame Christie & her twee company.

So the night brimm'd a goblet romantic
& our spirits they sparkl'd as the stars,
Dabbling with the gentle alcoholic,
Floating, flirting, through my favourite bars...

Til at the sound of Big Ben's midnight bells
She caught the last train back to Tunbridge Wells

37,000 ft

Across Europa we have both progress'd,
By foot, by boat, by tram, by bus, by train,
But this hour, from a cool & pleasant plane,
Sees me sailing air on a grander quest,
The scenes by cyan skies & soft cloud blest,
How seldom seen & varied the terrain
Of ashen peak, urban sprawl, verdant plain,
Gleaming sea, wastes of sand & wylde forest.

So now we have abandon'd Europa,
Already I can taste the eastern scent,
The sun is setting west of Syria,
The starry heavens singing its lament,
As somewhere yon the grey Arabia
My pilot is beginning his descent.

MUMBAI

Our plane approaches as the ghostly wraith
Through nights black regions steadily she falls
 Unto a lab'rynthe of a billion souls,
 Crude myriad of language, race & faith.

So I am come, come to this sultry shore,
 Bright jewel of the crown Victorian
 To sup from cups full of empyrean
 & all her diverse cultures fear namore.

By Eastern flair is Western thought inspired
 I was recently led to understand,
 With me I have fetched a man of England
 & all the memory his mind acquired.

Should I deny this infant urchins, "*Please!*"
How many times would I see sights like these?

THE EAR CLEANER

Stepping out one golden Goan morning,
Drowsy with the sunken sun's adorning,
Content I was to be in nature's hand,
Soul-freshen'd as bare feet sunk into sand,
From out of nowhere stept a wizen'd man,
"Sahib! cleaning your hearing well I can!"
Shows Western praises in his little book,
Black blocks of wax from both my ears he took
I shook the hand that scrubb'd my hearing clear
Said fond farewells & watch'd him disappear
Round red & rugged hill flank'd by the view
Of Konkan coast careering into blue,
Then first finding the profits of his fee
I never knew how sweetly sounds the sea.

SARASWATHI

I fixt mine inner eye upon a star,
In darshan disturbing this diety,
Lull'd by the tantric strains of her sitar
A pure white flowing goddess flew to me

Upon a swan of hue ambrosial,
Her fertile smile still'd time, her luted look
My hearts consort - sublimely cordial
She read from the Pustaka's sacred book

*"Wand' rer, thou art welcom'd to India,
This sari I have sewn know as thy guide,
Where e'er she willows there stay close behind!*

She closed the page, sail'd high skies to Brahma,
Perform'd the blissful duties of a bride,
Rare have I seen such beauties in my mind.

KARANCI

I took a breath or two of night time air
My heart not knowing why, my legs not where
The starry skies obscured by gremlin cloud
I headed for the hilltop temple loud
Where rattled such a throng of Saivite
Songs echoing thro tea plantation night
Seeming another Tuscany to me
For India oft feels like Italy
& all was silver as a Silver Oak
For searing thro the deep & astral smoke
I found there was a full moon pulling clear
These are the moments poets hold so dear
Thro selene scenes setting dream-trails in store
On 'morrow morns may pass these ways once more.

INDIAN RAILWAYS

I found myself waiting at this train station
Not for a train, it was just to buy a ticket
Not even for that day, but eleven in the future
The next one available from Ooty to Calicut
So I'm waiting & waiting & I'm waiting nit-pick longer
& the guy behind the desk's on his third guy in an hour
& I was fourth, but the seventh guy's hand starts waving
His reservation form as the third guy was about to finish
So I warned fifth, sixth, & seventh they'd be a foolish to push in
After all, I'd been walking in the sun all day like a mad English dog
& my legs felt like lead & I was definitely, definitely, going next...

So the third guy finishes & just as I thrust my form through the window
The guy behind the desk decides its time he went to the toilet
& then, when he gets back, the boulder closes the window for lunch!

FORT COCHIN

Come share a second with serenity
Up in this lake of European rooves,
The crescent lamp'd o'er Arabian sea
Lulls me thither, I hear the sound of hooves...
At once a sacred chime grows on the breeze,
Some teller of a thousand ancient tales,
Some from the world's crop-fellers overseas,
Some cross the Karakoram's lofty trails,
Some were seekers of immortal glory,
Some content to be husbands & be wives...
Though the vision all clutter'd & hoary,
With me a single memory survives,
Being extras in the global story
We are stars in the movies of our lives.

THIRUVALLUVAR

As I rested on a fine, empty beach, by the Bay of Bengal
In a soft second of existence I was alerted to a flutter of birds
A mile or so along the coast I saw a distant figure approaching.
An old man swathed in white robes, sporting a thick, black beard,
I expected him to pass, but as he came to within a few metres
He veer'd slowly towards me & was at my side in a flash
"What is your profession?" he curtly asked, *"I am a sonneteer, sir!"*
His magnificent eyes burrowed into the heartlands of my soul
"By any chance, are you carrying a silver rose?"
Astonish'd, I show'd him the flowers hung around my neck
After a moments deep thought he said, *"I have been expecting you,*
As seven words make a kural, seven kural form a sonnet!"
This was for me an epiphany as to the hidden depths of sonnetry,
& with those words he went away, no footsteps left in the sand

TRANSLATIONS FORM THIRUKKURAL

Rain's continuance preserves existance
Speaketh, then, ambrosia (2:1)

Falsehood conferring faultless fruitfulness
Nature's truth contains (30:2)

Kingly fame fades forgotten
Without righteous government (56:6)

When soldiers fear bloodshed
Kings cry destitute (77:1)

In miserable poverty's train
Many more miseries (105:5)

Her jewels perplex me
Celestial? Peahen? Women? (109:1)

Pleasure entertains my dreams
Wakeful desires obtain'd (122:4)

DEPARTING FOR ANDAMAN

Gazing across exotic ocean stream
Shamrock musing drifts to distant Burnley,
Where for as long as breathing there shall be
My friends, my family, my football team –

So far away, for following my dream
I am a stranger in a strange contree,
Though slowly hook'd upon its cup of tea,
Darjeeling serv'd up with a Devon cream.

The sun has fallen & the ship has sail'd,
The last lamps of the mainland shrink & fade,
A moment to define me has prevail'd
Born of the apex of my third decade,

Next time by solid ground my feet regaled
Into youth's fleeting heart I shall have stray'd.

SHIPWRECK'D

Down southern Andaman lies Jolly Bouy
Thick with bright coral & of snorkling joy
I spent an hour lagooning in a laze
& fell astoned... then woke... to my amaze
The boat had left, deserted, all alone,
No rizlas, samosas, water, nor phone
A mile or so across the sharky foam
A trail of smoke show'd someone was at home,
& so I built a raft but that soon sank,
So off I swam, my goddess I should thank
For showing me this was a wild riptide
My muscles haul'd me back, I'd nearly died
Then shouting to some boats around sunset,
I was the strangest fish they'd ever net.

THE INDIAD
PART 2 – north India
Feb – April 2006

AVATARAS

At the back of the ship, at the height of the trip,
Drawn by the harmonies of Lord Vishnu's call,
I saw cross the waters navel rooted lotus
Absorbing the beauteous bay of Bengal,
Transcending to milk, pearly seaway of silk,
Thou lavender cushion of infinite white,
Surrounding the foetal spirit centripetal
Sucking upon toenails painted starry bright.

*"Rider, thou art welcome to India,
Saraswathi, I see, has smil'd on you,
Thy mortal aura bless'd in her prayer,
Thine energies hued in a rainstorm blue,
Come drape thyself in the Himalaya,
For there, my child, thou wilt know what to do."*

BHAGAVAD GITA

Let us transfer to a field of battle
Where two armies are solemnly opposed
Forever on the Gangeatic plane,

Between, steering a golden chariot
Drawn by four horses whiter than the eye,
Stands Krishna, sacred keeper of the cows,

Him born when all India was asleep,
By him knelt Arjun in woeful weeping,
Shedding tears for brethren he must affray,

The king bouy'd up by his charioteer,
From potent lips gallops the song of God,
Defining how a man should live with peace,

& though the fight would be a bloody one,
All karmas laid a spiritual base.

NANDA DEVI

Up to the world's rooftop I slowly rose;
Checking upon the progress of the soul
Appears a mountain prospect a la snows
Of Austria, New Zealand & Nepal.

I left Almora for the Kashyap Hill,
High commune of fairest tranquility,
Fresh dawning drew me to the lofty chill
Of this monolithic Axis Mundi.

It seems for me the lips of Lakshmi smile,
No sweeter place on earth to greet the sun,
Here summoned by the lyrical lifestyle,
I whisper a gentle dedication;

*"Until my feet have circuited the globe
My thought & life with poesy I shall robe."*

THE INDIAN CASTE SYSTEM

Ever since pale Aryans declared darker skin inferior
The caste system has been entrenched in the Indian psyche
A ruthless evil, it has proved a divisive violent force
Some socio-political blockage of the DNA vein

But you can't stop progress...

As technology once forced the weavers into factories
Education has dragged India's feudal caste system
Kicking & screaming into the modern age

Indian fathers once made all manners of handicrafts
& at the same time taught their sons the trade -
Lohar, Sonar, Kumbhar, Dhobi, Darzi, Kewat, Teli -

Now Industry denies vocation, caste shrinks in status,
Others intermarry against grandmother's firm objections
While others go to college to simply choose their lot in life

NATARAJA

One timeless night in the scorch'd wilderness,
When sands & stars ranged with immensity,
Sinew'd with the verve of youth's loveliness,
Lord Siva, the destroyer, came to me.

He left his mountains with a single stride,
Three velvet eyes a-gleam with dreamy hue,
Caphor white, clad in an ivory hide,
He had come to consecrate my Saddhu.

Nearby smoulder'd a fresh cremation pile,
Soon daub'd in ash we danced a pirrouhette,
Absorb'd in the Daemon Damaru drum.

The dreadlock'd Ganges spun in sundry style,
His halo trail'd a blue blaze-tail'd comet,
My senses drew an esoteric numb.

RAJPUTANA

Gigantic Jodhpur
Round mem'orable Mehranga
Rippling sea-surf rooves

Oasis Jaiselmer
From turret & tower gold
Homesteads blend with sand

Jaipur's pink lady
Thro the Tiger Fort breaches
Fledgling climbers rise

Oer shanti Bundi
Stoic Tarragarh hovers
Grand & goblin-hewn

Visions conjured forever
With somakshetriyan fire

OVERTAKING LANES

Two saddus stood by the side of the road
Staring at a truck that had spill'd it's load
By that, an old wreck that just would not start
Bypass'd by a man in an ox-drawn cart,
& faster still; first a cycle rickshaw
A dull green tractor from the days of yore,
Auto-rickshaw belching dirty black smoke,
Bright red moped missing many-a-spoke,
Some weird lorry's siren psychedelics,
Bus driven by two mad alcoholics,
These by breezy motorcycle bypass'd
Til last, a white car of the Rajput caste,
O lawless highways death-dark angels stalk
You know, it's a nice day, I think I'll walk.

JAIT SAGAR

If India can make a man a man
More than the brothel-nests of Amsterdam
If thro the chaos he can make a plan
Respecting Hinduism & Islam

If he can give the beggar his rupee
& tip a tout charging over the odds
If he can read his Rajput history
& choose a god but still bless other gods

If he can bear the rolling railway run,
Find fresh clean waterfalls amid the dirt
If he can wonder how the Raj was won
Then pause upon the horrors & the hurt

If he can haggle down & know his daal
Then does he need to see the Taj Mahal?

PANEER

First make paneer from bubbling pans of milk
A little lemon juice to separate
Then freeze the cheezy tofu to smooth silk
& place it by the veggies on a plate.

Heat up the oil, two cloves of garlic fry,
Toss in red onion & a pepper green
Stir till the scent of cooking warm & dry
Then add paneer with soft & salty sheen.

Mix in the sauce, tescoe's or one own brand
Of soy-sauce-brush'd tomatoes flush with spice -
All the colours of the hot desert sand.

Cook up & then your curry will appear
To serve upon a bed of saffron rice,
Wash'd down with a white wine or nice, cold beer.

DEPARTING INDIA

An olympiad since that piazza
Where first I flirted with the myrtle muse,
Now knoweth I a new peninsula
Whose galaxy of monuments enthuse
The spiritus, where all Earthly aspects
Have form'd a microcosm of the sphere,
Firm foundation for when I journey next,
Days of endeavour drawing ever near.

Around the Raj was flung a faerie ring
& all it's channel'd poesis regaled,
I have succeeded in my conquering
Where Ghengiz Khan & Alexander fail'd.

I smile a moment, musing on the wing,
As oer the sea of Araby we sail'd.

INDIA

Nation of nations, hot & happy land!
With spicy dishes morsell'd by the hand
 Being a valourous & graceful race,
 Thy universal mullet firm in place,
Despite taking three men to stamp a form
Corrupted feudalism Laksmi's norm
 A fanatacism for the rupee
 Cements this secular society
Of power-cuts & cripples & bazaars
 Neath a pristine panapoly of stars,
Of swastikas & cricket in the streets,
Bounteous crops & oversugar'd sweets,
 Ashrams soothing riot-torn religion
& always blaze the rays of Asia's sun.

HOMECOMING

At last my gaze is cast oer English skies,
The thrill of homecoming springing inside,
We burst thro' cloud to claim a poet's prize;
Big Ben...Tower Bridge...Millenial ride.

So I am back, back from my epic tour
Ten rupees all that furnishes my purse,
Scruffy & tann'd I call upon the door
Of compassion & an NHS nurse.

*"Well I cough'd up blood-clots, gush'd dysentry,
Mozzy bites have turn'd into puss-fill'd scabs,
Salmonella, concussion, twisted knee,
Neuropraxia, the screaming ab-dabs!"*

*"It's lucky you survived" ...I smiled a smile,
"Dying," said I, "It's never been my style"*

THE ENGLISH CASTE SYSTEM

"Call that democracy!" shouts the hypocritic West...

While a monarch sits sycophantic to her taxpayers
Her beggars sleep in hostels, addicted to allsorts of bullshit
& skivers, real or blagging, milk her great state cash cow dry

Our primal meat is eating – farmers, chefs & grocers serve us
Then Builders & architects provide the other basic need
The factories manufacture all life's myriad necessities
Administer'd by penpushers in bright satanic offices

Next are the social cornerstones – doctors, teachers, soldiers
Then life's little luxuries, like film-makers & artists
Above all these the moneymen making the world go round
Overseen by the overloads – our judges & parliamentary elect

Above all these the fossils rot that fill up the House of Lords

So Indians are basically English but noble enough to admit it

KARMA SUTRA

The city streets were alive with neon,
I knock'd & Kate answer'd there delighted,
My favourite fuck-buddy in London,
Her stairs were excitedly alighted.

I cook'd up a couple of samosas,
Chappathis, biriyani & paneer,
Making out to the Stars & the Roses
Over charas & charlie & cold beer.

I show'd her a book bought in Madurai,
The Karma Sutra's esoteric scene,
"So babe, do you wanna give it a try?"
We did & at a later hour serene

As my lover slept on my naked chest
I felt that special bliss as East meets West.

BRITANNIAD – part 1

DOVER

Out of the hazy sea rose those famous white cliffs,
Merging with the white band on the horizon

England's first castle stands watch above the straight
Sea-cat reaches the quayside ten minutes before I set off
Allowing for time zones I had in fact travelled backwards

Passport control is a breeze, one luminous-vested border guy
Does not take too kindly to me claiming political asylum
I pretend to be Moldovan - the gag gets them every time.

Scruffy tobacco smugglers walk the quaint streets of Dover

I find a tea-shop full of nattering old dears,
Sip slowly on a pot of aromatic Earl Grey
Quintessential flavour of a refined English day.

I caught a clanking train out of town
The British Isles spread majestically before me.

THIS IS MY CONTREE

Good Morning Great Britain
Still great, still Britain
The sun is shining, 10:45 AM
£296.26 pence in my pocket
Time to bet it all on black & hit the road again

But if time is a mere scratch & life is nothing
& nothing that occurs is of the slightest importance

From Aberdeen to Birmingham, Arundel & Deal
From Dullis Hill to Rotherham, Bristol & Peel
From Inverness to Liverpool, Leeds & Palmer's Green
From Lewisham to Padiham & all the pubs between
From Badminton to Twickenham & Barton-in-the Beans

From mud, thro blood to the green fields beyond

This is my time,
This is my rhyme,
This is my contree

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS

I fell upon the spa as morning dew
A Pegasus amid the hippogriffs
Heralded arrival with awesome riffs
Aggravating the local well-to-do
In poet gestation, frolicking through
Visits from dibble & dumb-dog bailiffs,
Spent vernal season with merlot & spliffs
Relentlessly studying World War Two.

But a few June days shy of twenty-five
The standard time for poets to retire,
Genuine epic 'gan to compose,
My confidence in poetry alive
& history too! empyrean fire
Made phantom flames about each silver rose.

SPRING

Wool-white wilderness
Pendle to Chelsea garden
Mist-lock'd, frost-shock dawn

Year's first warm morning
Lone bee stalks the wilderness
Birds breeze on the wing

Beams of warm amber
Penetrate the morning mists
Snowdrops drink the thaw

O trees! such budding!
Thy delicate bursts of green
Nervous turtleheads

As colours surprise the eye
Praise Persephone at last!

DUNORLAN PARK

Expectancy breathes in the milding air,
The flocks have returned, the trees show the bud,
 Along the River Teise a poet strides,
 Spies in the fields flocks of mothering sheep
Clustering the new born lambs with soft cries,
 Who stare at the poet in nervous fear,
Nearby two drakes are fighting for a mate,
 This spinning vortex of quack & feather,
A nipping, splashing duel of two love-lorn
Birds, fighting from instinct & not training;
Watching them wear each other down a third
 Drake, nestled in the shades of a willow,
 Waits for her signal to join the melee
For sure it is his seed that shall succeed.

CALVERLY

I stroll the pleasant-peopl'd promenade,
 Bask in each canopied facade

A certain elegance claims the crescent
 Like pimms, poetry & pheasant

For here dwells a simple serenity
 Binding her calm community

Yonder, in old Decimus Burton's park,
 Sun-scouts of Spring waken the lark,

The sweet vernal grass & the wild primrose,
 Such stuff for the watching windows.

Gracious nature constructs a spacious wreath,
 Am I far from the swarthy heath?

Shall I return with the lush blooms of May
 & the roads they seem so far away.

CAMPING

A few miles west of Winchelsea Fern found
A perfectly poetic spot called Fairlight,
Perched atop a cliff, private beach below us
Grey-green channel stretching out to France
Behind us the lovely down country
To our right a forested coastal hill
Dotted with extravagant looking houses,
Homes of the wealthy, or famous elite,
Like Paul McCartney's crazy second daughter,
Soon in 'man' mode I whipped up a fair campsite,
Found a large pallet & with a few ninja moves
Broke it into firewood, cook'd a veritable feast
Wash'd down with wine & the romantic sunset
Making love like lions on the tall cliff's edge.

GREATEST FADER OF THE WESTERN ISLES

I First learned how to Fade at sweet sixteen
Top of the M1, dirty Leeds in the rain
"Fuck that!" I thought & hopped on a train
I aint ever looked back (or paid) since

I stayed in one place once - didn't like it much
When bodies have freedom the mind follows suit
Flush'd clean by flashing scenery, riding the rails

Thorsten Veiben said,

*"He with sufficient means to live
Without gainful employment is a gentleman!"*

Some may call me thief but I, I am a sportsman
Hooked on the adrenalin rush of reaching destinations

Until I got caught! Yes caught! on the Brighton to Cardiff line
& I was so angry at myself I spent the whole day jumping
trains
Getting off at every station shaking my head in sheer disgust!

BRITISH ISLES

Did you ever take these bright isles in a tour,
The pride of Scotland slake on Hampden's awesome roar
& did you ever stun the herd of Wicklow deer
Or strike a mountain run on Snowdon sloping sheer?

& have you spent a night with Haggis Burns & song
Or watch'd a ravensflight from battle cairns at King
& have you seen the sun oer Glencoe's savagery
Or seen Portmeirion in total privacy

Did you cook breakfast upon old Boney's nose
Looking down on Belfast & all those terraced rows
& have you ever stood atop the Isle of Man
With weather fine & good, & Britain like a fan

To an Englishman with liberty your native land a tinge
Of Earth's many colours, but first your Celtic fringe!

CAMBRIA

I enter'd Wales along its southern shore
Pass'd many breezy towns of prime bereft
Like Newport, Port Talbert, Haverfordwest,
Until I saw Saint David's ancient spires
& met the Irish ocean with a smile
The coast curl'd north, ghostly Aberystwyth
Aberdovey's dream, Harlech's stoic keep
Dolgellau's mellow stream, fair Machynlleth,
Portmerions bejewell'd masonry
Delayed my days, for this is wondrous Wales,
A David to the Saxon Goliath,
But prouder than each English heart I know
& as I stood upon Glendower's keep,
Ahead Cymru's grey passes consume sky

GWYNEDD

I tackl'd Snowdon from the low Rhyd Ddu
Infinite furlongs from her summit view;
The little cluster that is Liverpool
& many mountain masses minds enjewel,
The twinkle of the distant river Dee,
The rising lion of Aran Fawwdwy,
The quaint domain of old Dolgellau grey,
The epic sweep that keeps Cardigan Bay,
Dinas Emrys & her sleeping dragon,
Castles at Flint, Harlech & Caernarvon,
The isle adjacent to th'adjacent isle
& yonder Wicklow's shadowy defile -
The British Isles have wrapt me all around,
Though in the heavens I still touch her ground.

ANTHEM FOR BLOOMING YOUTH

Son, come let me tell you something
Of life & her mysteries
First you have to be drunk in Dublin
To see the planet as it is
& to see the man that you are, son,
Go wander alone with the fells,
Help sail a fine ship cross the ocean,
Or sing to your soul in the cells

Son, come let me tell you something
For life always comes with a twist,
You have to make time for your women,
Because women are why we exist,
So, son why the hell are you waiting
Fuck off to Dublin & get piss'd

EIRE

From Holyhead the British Isles recede
Before another spreads horizon wide
& soon we have entered the Dublin pale
Divided by the sluggish Liffy flow
Refreshment lifts us from the temple bar
Through Bray into the gloomy Wicklow Hills
To spend a week at gorgeous Glendaloch
Then gallop west through Galway's savage peaks
To brave the fierce, grievous Atlantic spray
& scale the heights some human mountain goat,
To pace the ancient battle cairns of Cong
Then back to Dublin, cross the bloody Boyne
& up to Belfast's passionate divides
Where Scotland twinkles cross a Celtic Sea

BELFAST

Upon *Cave Hill* I climb'd & took repast
Ulster's voyeur, perch'd high over *Belfast*
The yards where the Titanic came to be
The arm of *Scotland* reaching cross the sea
The mural hues of *Shanklin* & the *Falls*
The most majestic of our city halls
Where flies the flag that cross'd the bloody *Boyne*
Soon strewn upon the roads of the *Ardoyne*
Decent folk forgetting recent troubles
Rising from the riots & the rubbles
An age of balaclavas & kneecaps
That at a moments notice may relapse
But since good men brokered the '*Good Friday*'
The IRA shall shed no blood today

BRITANNIAD part 2

HIGHLAND DRIVE

The Scottish essence seems a harsher clime
But soak'd in history as soak'd in rain
Like Keats I circuited the Celtic North
The long road from Stranraer led to Dumfries
Where Dalveen Pass was proof of God's own art
Through Lanarkshire we drove up to Glasgow
Third of Great Britain's megalopoli
Yielding to Loch Lomond's vibrant forest
Before Glen Coe's ghostly & ghastly peaks,
Above the savage Lochs of Rannoch Moor
Further north stands Castle Urqhart beside
The jagged axe-wound of the monstrous Ness,
More west we saw Viking Eilean Donan
Before the Kyle of Lochalsh led to Skye.

SKYE BY NIGHT

I found myself on the edge of civilization
Not Tierra del Fuego or frozen Archangel
But Portree, place to be, 'metropolis' of Skye
Two thousand Highlanders sheep dip high
Europe's second highest suicides among young men
The port seems too quiet as I am drawn
To the sound of ceileigh at the Gathering Hall
"Can we have a drink?"

"I'm afraid ye cannae!"

"Is this a local party for local people?"

Glenda hands me the flyer

18th annual Isle of Skye
Alcoholics Anonymous gathering
Tonight's theme... Tolerance

SKYE

As Kestrels surf the mountain-fringed spaces
Road twists between saturnine gargants,
Romantic mounds of monstrous magma,
Marvelous munroes of aulden minstrel-song,
Lost in the moment, eyes keen to the skies,
Hard traveling unravels, sailing above us
Silver-fire mists of the sylvan alpine rise,
& beyond, entering the stunning scope
Of another planet, another Jupiter,
Sodden expanse of treeless waste,
But beautiful land, stupendous Cuillin hills,
Seats of Titans, where thrusting solar shafts
Induce startling notions of timelessness -
Here there is no time, only milky flowing waterfalls.

LOCH FYNE

As I went walking round wild Ardkinglas
With sea-loch mist a wood-thrush swoop overhead
My senses stirr'd as speechless I did pass,
The noble Fir, tall Beech & Rowan red.

I felt an Oak, as centuries have spread
The foliage of these monarchs of trees
& canopy the soil on which are shed
Their leafy legacy! a deft sea-breeze

Did shake a flower-stalk as tho' to please
My love of nat'ral things, a soul reborn,
Like pond & lily pad at perfect ease,
I found repose, harbour'd neath a Hawthorn,

As seasons rouse our sensibility
I felt a pagan in my poetry.

SCOTTISH PROVERBS

Daith & drink-drainin name near neebors,
The fairest maidens wear nae purses,
A crookit stick thraws an awfa shadow,
Call back again ye're no phantom fellow,
A good man's anger passes rapidly,
Great pains an little gains mak's a man weary,
Gie the deil his due an to him ye'll gang,
Breid an broun ale winnae last lang,
Sellers of ales shouldnae tell tales,
Force wi'oot foresicht aften fails,
Guid advice is never oot o season,
Woman dea their wirk efter her ain fashion,
A giud tayles no bad o bein twice told,
Spare when ye're young, an spend when ye're auld!

OLD FIRM

To Celtic Park, vast stadium of green,
Two famous football teams have come to play
Tricolors answering, "*God save the queen!*"
Both urging laddies on into the fray
To happy cheers & gestures of dismay
Those twenty-two young lions give their all
As the swirling winds of a winter's day
Whip up a frantic phrenzie round the ball,
Lord of a contest far too close to call!
Both "*Come on the Hoops!*" & "*Come on the 'Gers!*"
Loudly resound until that sacred goal
When little lads & leaping managers
Become part of the great soul-stirring show
That settles the little league of Glasgow.

OVER LOTHIAN

We forage up volcanic Berwick Law
Reliquary Votadinian our mates
From gorse-gold mount the jewell'd Lothian shore
Curves round the Firth of Forth's most famous gates,

From Dunbar, past Bass Rock's Hawthian traits,
Grand Gullane & soft-shored Aberlady,
To Prestonpans, where redcoats rue their fates,
Waiting raw revenge at poor Drummissie,

& further still, beside the Fifer sea,
The silver streak of Portobello sands,
Leads us to Leith, then inland, shadowy,
Peeps Arthur's Seat, by these sleeping Pentlands;

Although ours be a journey of the mind
Forever with this verse the way we bind.

DRUID STONE DRIVE

Sun slipping slow & low now
Enchanting valleys etch'd by Autumn
Over the Teviot, Ewes, Esk & Eden
Cumberland's Volcano husks surround

Sun blesses Souther fell
Phantom army astride her eastern side
The fata morgana of spectral Rhegium

Sun setting, red glow spreading
Saddleback, Hellvellyn & other such lords
Such stuff to inspire regnant poets of old
Before quaint Keswick the road sharply climbs

Sun slips beneath mountains
All round an amphitheatre of giants
Lit by the magic of old Castlerigg

A TASTE OF HONEY

Where the roman road made a ford over Eamont
Beneath the piny Beacon live the people of Penrith
Lovely little market town lapping gin the lakes
& best amateur dramatics in Cumbria

Man! I had never even acted before
But Wined, dined & lauded for my shade of skin
A sailor's suit a single mother & a mixed race child!
The impermanent electricity of performance
Adrenalin nerves, literally shit myself
As did my co-star, the guy gay who knitted

Then, at the end, when all the board-treading done
Applause still ringing round a now empty theatre
I took to the stage & swept through a scene
Invisible actress & a tear in the eye...

LANCASHIRE

There is one thing you should know about the Pennines
That is, simply, there is a right side & a wrong side
Lancashire = right side & Yorkshire = wrong side

Poet Country Mountains crowd the pitmurk to my right
Then Preston, Blackburn, Accrington & Burnley,
Along Accy Road down the hill to the bus station
Two pound First Day ticket, West Yorkshire my domain
Behind a terraced town Pendle climbs resplendent
Such a cool peak men have named it three times
The Celtic 'penn', Anglo-Saxon 'dilh' & the local 'hill'
One last glance at the urban grey as to my right
Midst Hurstwood Spenser's ghost still lingers in the leaves
Then comes classy Cliviger, road cleaves thro the Moors
Dramatic slopes fashioning rugged theatres for rugged souls

YORKSHIRE

Ower t'ills up Northways stormclouds thump on drain
Trundling thro Todmorden & all her narrow villages
Totta's ancient boundary betwixt red rose & white
Into the hippy haven tween the hills at Hebden Bridge
Heart of the hip valley where the wylde rose grows
& on to Mytholmroyd, birthplace of laurel Hughes
& on to Halifax to catch a bus for dirty Leeds

Leaves are scatter'd on the road at Odsal Top as by me
Bradford's wide bowl passes as we inch into Stanningley
One year for Pudsey C I played chess here quite excitedly
Then on into Armley & her park a perfect place
For poets to sigh & muse romantic reason
Nut memories now, as memory breeds
Conflicting reminiscences of days squander'd in Leeds

200 Miles

Beyond the crooked spire of Chesterfield
A monotone midlands mumbles by

We reach the Nam* - high rise after high rise
100 miles to go to the next big smoke

Sat with Colombians on the Silverlink South
Coke barons, businessmen, probably both

BIRMINGHAM INTERNATIONAL
The Colombians head for home

Coventry & the dull red rows of Rugby
Milton Keynes & Watford Junction

We enter some terrifying & yet terrific vastness
Two hundred & fifty square miles of concrete, parks & cars

Wembley, Queens Park, Paddington, Oxford Circus
Suck'd deep into the capital with an electric roar

* Birming-nam

DREAMS OF HEATHER LODGE

There was a time I felt compell'd to race
Round London at a hundred miles an hour
Hopping twyx train & bus, but now my pace
 To footstep slows,
 Fuell'd by my own power
 I have noticed the needlessness of car
Walking between East Linton & Dunbar

Perhaps I should move to that country pile
The same funds here could only rent a room,
& bless my zephyr with a certain smile
 Erewhile she blows!

 Above the clouds grown gloom
As yesterday I loved London once more
 Today I yearn for Lothian's fair shore!

BACK IN LONDON

So this is London still, a half-life past
Since first I fled here fourteen years ago
Sensing this soul his young foal far surpass'd
For then I lusted for seraglio
All vice & virtues then were mine, & known
All England's faces, snowflake different,
& now another of set of sonnets flown!
Am I too late this river to repent?

But knowing not the towers of Tashkent
Nor writing haiku through a Nippon night
Sat underground assuming new intent
Through White City, out into the sunlight,
I find myself on roads ne'er walk'd before
What tides shall take me forth? & to what shore?

EUROPIAD

EUROPA

(location)

Did you ever ride the high-speed Gallic trains
Or climb a mountainside kept by Croatian swains
& did you ever try the tramways of Zurich
Or skiing full hilt fly upon an Alpine peak?

Did you take a dance with maidens of Seville
Or breathe the elegance of the Avantine Hill
& taste the brevity of the Venetian masque
Or walk the wylde contree barefoot upon the Basque?

Did you ever tour the fields of Waterloo
Or urge Rooney to score amidst a foreign crew
& did you lap the flow of Castalian Spring
Or seek a fireside glow from Finland's wintry sting?

To an Englishman with liberty, art thou adventurous?
Let freedom clasp thy hood & cross the Bosphorous

A CURIOUS TOUR OF FRANCE

(journey)

The triumphant train jump from dreary Calais
Our spacious rooms & balcony above Albert
Took a minute to traverse the grave-peppered land
It took three brutal months of murder once to take,
Playing marbles with the little rusting, shrapnel balls
Glorious weather paints the plains of Northern France
The old city of Amiens & golden Boulogne
Ice creams on the beach & laughing at the locals...

At last! Our final train jump back to Calais
Pincer attack approaching & the toilets locked,
Fern crouch'd in a luggage space, covered by her coat,
At one point I thought we'd blown it for I was using schoolboy
Nous & -ons (for we) rather than Je & -e (for I)
Luckily the lady assumed I was your typical Englishman
Sold me a single ticket, & when the coast was clear
We giggled all the way back home to Blighty

AMSTERDAMINIT

(dramatic)

We trawl'd the long-haul of the motorway
& pick'd up more pot-heads past Birmingham
Jelly wobbles on the waves to Calais,
Mojo puked in the lowlands near the 'Dam.

We rush'd to relax in the smoky cafes;
Tried Purple Haze & buy Sensemelia,
Each coffee & space-cake puff'd up the daze
Of a mushroom-gilded psychedelia.

We tram'd through 'Dam to the sleezy district,
Pluck'd up Dutch courage for 'Sucky fucky,'
Crack head whores begg'd at doors, wink'd to be dicked-
Its a shame when you pay to get lucky...

Skunked-up, smashed to fuck, zombie bus, bongtubes,
Grass stashed up Nicky's ass, Richie's itchy pubes.

THE ESSENCE OF INK

(ode)

Composed on a tour of the Xerox Factory, Breukelen

If blood be the concourse of our lives,
Then ink must be the very breath of men,
For at the time it pours down from a pen,
The sublime spirit of the soul survives
& erudite futurity derives
All that we glean both topical & ken,
Yes! praise sweet ink & praise the moments when
Love letters cement husbandry & wives.

Come flow, black gold, key to society,
From accounts of Phoenician merchantry
To prophet-preaching on the desert scrolls
Through Caxton to this fledgling century,
Record the goings-on of history,
So many moments & so many souls.

THE LOST POEM - part 2

(biographical)

I found an old poem I'd written today
It had turned up in Livy's *Early History of Rome*
I'd packed it to study on my mission round the Baltic
Where trawling about the soft streets of Stockholm
Every time I touch'd the book the sheet fell out the pages
Constantly reminding me that I should make it safe
It would only take a second, but I never took the time...

Later on I was dining upon the deck of my the hotel boat
& as I turn'd a page the seabreeze blew out my poem
Time was standing still but the paper started

F

A

L

To slip thro the narrowest of cracks tween the L boards

To be found one day in the distant future I

By somebody breaking up the hold for scrap N

But now, at last my poem had a proper end! G

ALFRED NOBLE

(tribute)

Nitroglycerine & siliceous sand
Mix accidental, vast a fortune spann'd!
Dynamite forging tunnels & bridges
Soon deity on blood-splattered ridges,
His conscience prick'd, dictates heroic will,
His legacy shall save his conscience still,
Each year this rich estate awards a prize
To those with distant vistas in their eyes,
Abundant in life's creativity
Or devoted to Earth's fraternity;
Einstein, Curie, Alexander Fleming,
The Dalai Lama, Martin Luther-King
& many others have deserved their name
To know a portion of his global fame.

ERFURT
(zeitgeist)

Outside the Gutenberg Gymnasium
I can feel the children of Columbine
Those victims of teenage terrorism
When student rages this strange age define

It was the unholy of Easters
Steinhauser flinging bullets at the law,
But students safe! just those scweinhund teachers
Chosen to die, his explusion still raw!

As helicopter shadows skirt the school
A world of books becomes a world of blood
Al fresco cops tarr'd with *'la garde recule!'*
The ninja-kid murdering who he could

'Til *"Fur heute reicht's, Herr Heise,"* the homicide
Was settl'd with his standard suicide!

THE OUTER SOLAR SYSTEM
(didactic)

"Everywhere I go I find a poet has been there before me"
Sigmund Freud

Did you feel winds form on Neptune's azure reed
Or watch the great red storm from twinkling Ganymede
& did you once observe the green Urasian glow
& with Colombus verve pass fringes of Pluto?
Have you ever gone beyond the icy Quaoar
Or paused at Ixion, core of an ancyent star,
& did you scan the skies from lovely Varuna
Or set your naked eyes on sanguinous Sedna?
Now even further spin yet two more scatter'd spheres,
Through head of tiny pin our massive sun appears,
From Eridian side Dysnomia slips round,
& there we find no guide, nor shall we hear a sound...

For an Englishman with liberty must face the stretch of space
Continuous, alone, & vanish without trace...

On August 24 2006 the International Astronomical Union redefined the term planet – now there would only be eight 'planets' (Mercury through to Neptune) & a number of 'Dwarf planets,' the largest being Pluto, Sedna (discovered November 2003) & Eris (January 2005) - the furthest object orbiting the sun

ADRIATICA

(pastoral)

Serene afternoon... the streets of Rab are quiet, the stones
I step on as smooth as silk – the sky cloudless, deep azure,
Collar turned up I begin an ascent, the terrain
A plethora of white, jagged, quartz-like stone.

Half-way up the yellow, flower-trumpet dotted peak
I gaze back on an island, evergreen forest-realm
Silky-still lagoons, snow-capp'd mainland mountains
& Rab's marble township jutting out like luxury liner.

My ears strain for noise, relieved by buzzing fly,
& bleating phalanx of sheep, led by rustic Croat
Whose rocks usher stray ewes & lamb back to the flock.

As the sheep disappear I resume my scrambling climb
Up this lizard-strewn gully to the stony summit, & feel
Some mighty wind thundering across a thousand islands.

PARADISE OF EXILES

(poetic)

Did your pallet taste sepia's sable sheen
Or spread green pesto paste on bread like margerine
& steep Collodi climb to read Pinnochio
Or see day set sublime oer Pontevocchio

Did you Lord Byron rais'd through old Venetian lanes
Or fond yourself amazed by Pompeii's strange remains
& did you ever take the waters of Trieste
Or swim Averno's lake without a moments rest

Did you cheer the riffs as Ligabue rocks
Walk Cinque Terran cliffs, or bought Le Scale box
& did you deck the sails round Ponza's pirate isle
Or study Tuscan tayles in Dante's sweet new style

To a sonneteer with liberty Italy has it all,
No finer place on earth there is to forge a poet's soul!

GLEND A : A PROPOSAL

(amoretti)

We are the music of the finches green
We are twa pussies purring by the fire
We are the fragrance of a vernal scene
We are twa frogs full-throated with desire

We are the thistle of your bonnie land
We are twa rabbits sprinting cross the glen
We are the seaweed wash'd up on the sand
We are twa badgers snuggled in their den

We are mony in the Tuscan Enclaves
We are night on the sea of Araby
We are twa birds gliding on the white waves
For we are one in nature, you & me

So spread your wings & hurry oer the foam
 To kiss my lips & marry me in Rome!

THE SIEGE OF MALTA

(historical)

Launch'd forward with a single-minded goal
The Sultan's arm reach'd for the Maltese thorn,
Beaching his high renown upon the stone
& waited for the day when she would fall,
Waited as thousands fought & gave their all,
Brave Saracens, each one a soldier born,
Baring the Crescent of the Golden Horn,
To plant them on Saint Elmo's carnage-wall.

But not for nothing is a native rais'd
On sacred soil soak'd in ancestral blood,
By Christ's Knights Maltese fought on every side,
Facing furious battle full unphazed,
Til on the batter'd ramparts freemen stood,
Cursing that fleeing fleet with tearful pride.

MALTESE PROVERBS

(philosophical)

Ugly husbands soon hated
Lovely husbands, stalked

When accounting for lives
Endings outrank beginnings

As corpses rot away
Grief diminishes daily

Better honest, tatter'd peasant
Than bitter-tongued aristocrat

Money employed invites interest
Money saved, thieves

To destroy irritating cobwebs
Kill thread-spinning spiders

Prior to renting houses
Investigate neighbouring families

ROSSONERO

(vista)

I sat as a San Siro partisan*
Not Inter's cuckoo, dismissing intrigue
What missile shot thro the Champion's League,
Claiming glory each man an artisan,
Some Scythian Chief, some Nazi Kapitan,
Who now have launch'd another bold blitzkreig
Upon defenders flailing with intrigue,
Whose goal-bound ball's gliding catamaran
Becomes a cataclysmic catalyst
As all aroar &, all the more, upryst -
The famous family of Lombardy
Pays homage to their heroes on the park
& tho the skies above the stars are dark
In floods of light I'll write my poetry.

* *set: 229 fila: 4 posto: 73*

TUSCIAD - September 2006

ON ARRIVAL IN TUSCANY

(terza)

Breathing the serried warmth of Italy
So many seasons since we shared the dream
Fortess of our poetic trinity!

I flew to Pisa & the pleasant scheme
Of Byron & the Shelleys' golden age
When life & liberty lived to extreme

Then Lucca rose in Rajastani rage
I left those walls that shook my vertigo
Left for a place to free my pregnant page

Finding my mind, lost on Monte Carlo,
With Monte Serra & the setting sun
Beneath the spell of Del Cerruglino,

A moment of the sublime world was won -
The last full flush of youth's swift rush begun.

VALLOMBROSSA

(acrostic)

*D*rawn to Florence I found myself alone,
A rich-festival, Savonorola's fame
*N*umb'd parch'd senses, searching for quietude
*T*here came to me a lane & little church -
*E*scaping to the reign of Beatrix
*A*n apparition clad in priestly robes
*L*ed us to Vallombrossa's skiey pines
*I*nstinctive, as when the Sacred Poet,
*G*od-adoring, mused to the abbey-bells,
*H*oping for glory, & since those soft strolls
*I*talians forever taste his tongue
E'er tingling in his song-like harmony,
*R*oseate, or rising to royal pitch
*I*n sermons of Savonorolan flame!

CAMPALDINO

(couplet)

Across the sheer Consuma Pass the Papal Guelfs did steer
To permeate the Poppi plain, the Ghibellines appear
Noble Swabian lineage with rival war ensigns
Amplified by Catenaian Alps & spangling Appenines
The sun had risen muggy on Saint Barnabas's day,
Where over Verna Francis of Assisi's hands did pray,
Dante Alighieri, far beyond his metaphors,
Stood in the first line of the Guelfs, the fearless Feditors,
& faced the charging enemy & yes he was afraid
But Appollo-protected many mortal parries made
As now the Pavesari wrap around the fading foe
Who drop their shields & flee the field, splashing thro the Arno,
The Guelfs did claim a victory & furthermore the pride
"Come Dante," said Boccacio, *"Let us to Florence ride!"*

CASALINO

(Scottish)

More tranquil than the murmur of a rose,
The piazzas of Pratovecchia,
Bethlehem-twinning, harbour a sweet repose,
Calm cluster shepherds call Casalino -
Here Dante mused upon his fifth canto,
For Paulo & Francesca tears did pour,
Mixing with the streamlings of the Arno,
Flowing to ev'ry Italian shore -
A place to set poesia in store,
Where sacred sisters break the ancyent bread,
There, summoned by the grunting of wild boar
Into a place where feet have seldom tread,
Not life nor history shall help mine art,
Just fragrant music of the valley-heart.

*Pui tranquilo del mormorio della rosa, la piazza di Pratovecchia,
Betlemme-gemellare, rifugio una villaggio dolce, amosso calmo il pastori
chiamato Casalino - Ecco Dante meditato il suo cante cinque, Lacrime
versate per Paulo & Francesco, Mescolato con il fiumicello giovane
del'Arno, Scorando a tutta la riva d'Italia – UN posto per consevara la
poesia, Dove les suore sacreto spezzanno il pane antico, La, convoco presso
il gruniri dei chingialo selvaggi, Dentro un bosco dove un piede ha
calpestato raramente, Non vita ne storia auiteranno la mia arte, Solo
musica fragrante del cuore delal valle.*

GRAN
(english)

As Dante found himself in some dark wood
My soul has been tormented since ye died
But holding back time's tears, my weary flood!
I waited for your light to be my guide.

As Virgil took step with the Tuscan bard
Thro Hell's inferno to the face Divine
I travell'd far & tho the way was charr'd
I climb'd a peak & waited for a sign.

About, the bells of church & cattle sound,
As I pursue the dry bed of a stream
My sad heart breaks! An ickle trickle found
Lit by the leafy sunbeam-dappl'd gleam.

These highest headwaters of the Arno
Scatter'd her ashes in the flashing flow,

TUSCAN TOUR
(oriental)

City of Flowers
Over sea of orange rooves
Rises Domo's isle

Pinnochio land
Neath Old Collodi castle
Snake steep, cobbled streets

Bagnia di Lucca
If Prometheus unbound
Gods would garden here

Beautiful Barga
Valley gloom falls in a flash
When peaks sunder suns

From the tops of Tuscan trees
Verdant vistas everywhere.

FARFALLA

(artisan)

	*		*	
	*		*	
	*		*	
skoelapper		*	*	nipwisipwis
liblikas	farasha	titli	mariposa	dimago
burabiro	sommerflue	mot'l	petalou'da	paruparo
pi sugnya	<i>butterfly</i>	uvevane	kupu	lupelupe <i>vlinder</i> pulelehua
papillon	<i>lilldeh</i>	popti	peplim	papalotl
txipilota	<i>choochoo</i>	lepke	<i>perhonen</i>	luvivane
prajapathi	<i>papilio</i>	flutur	<i>bimbilo</i>	kupukupu
peperuda	<i>huitzil</i>	fuf lao	<i>bembe</i>	gorgoleta
borboleta	<i>kakupo</i>	tauriuö	<i>kelebek</i>	babochka
woo deep	<i>zanimu</i>	fithrildi	parpar	<i>fluturi</i> kipepeo bayboum
serurubele	<i>bulubulu</i>	metulj	<i>ramarama</i>	mpornboli
hevavahkema	fefe-fefe	pepeo	pili-pala	schmetterling
pillango	marlimarlirni	oguyo	shavishavi	parvaneh
sommerfugl		fjril		samanalaya

VAGABONDO

(french)

Solo, sono stato viaggio,
Dalle complessite senza vita,
Di villaggio a villaggio,
Panarami di vista a vista -
Oh! sospiri del Viarreggio,
Oh! scheletro catta di Calcata,
Solo, sono stato viaggio,
Dalle complessite senza vita.

Stelle quando sono campaggio,
Pensiero sulla passagio,
Oh! isola balerno di Ponza,
Oh! piazza confortolvemente,
Oh! bellaza di Portovenere,
Oh! Non complicato mezza-vita!

Alone, I went wandering, from complexities without life, from village to village, panorama from view to view - O! sighs of Viareggio, O! skeletal cats of Calcata, Alone, I went wandering, from complexities without life. Stars when I am camping, thoughts upon the path, O! whale-island of Ponza, O! comfortable city-squares, O! beauty of Portovenere, O! uncomplicated half-life!

A REPLY TO DANTE

(italian)

I reckon it was not love that you saw
But manifested images of soul
For when a muse first to her care dost call
The bard, then rise dreams, vivacious & raw.

From vixen Beatrix such pictures draw,
That blazing heart, thine art set to install,
That weeping man, emotion's pensive squall -
Then rave about these as is natural law.

Back when you ask'd us you were but a boy
Basking in your quattordici versi,
Exitedly probing for life's answers.

In such love unrequited you found joy
Indulging in a world of phantasy
Not sweet reality of romances.

In the first sonnet in his Vita Nuova, Dante Alighieri asks his fellow poets to explain the dream he had in which he saw his beloved Beatrix. His request was granted in the sonnet-form by many of his contemporaries, including Cavalcanti.

THE 14th CODEX

(heroic)

By quatorzain I took the Tuscan trail,
Cathedral of pastel sonnemancy
Some modern Anthony of Padua
Offers libations to Petrarchismo
Caskets of organic & aesthetic
Concentric & with concentrated thought -
As candles flicker brighter than the moon
When sun has set, then I shall now impress
Upon mine art the fusion of two souls -
Linkless corona of a thinker's song
Unlock & conquer secret mysteries
As did Dan Brown with his Da Vinci code
& galactic grew from terrestrial -
Soon sonneteers shall praise the cancer cure.

SONNETRY

(*kural*)

Sicilian mother, Tuscan nursemaid
English college tutor

What makes a sonnet?
Form, feeling, fever

Subject, shape, matter, diction
Generic feelings dictate

Upon conquering poetic feeling
Master myriad forms

Poesis restless travel generates
Channel into sequanzas

Fourteen stanzas sequanzas make
Fourteen sequanzas grander

Fourteen forms & feelings
Master sequanzas carve

MEMOIRS

(*open*)

I was an eight-year-old Burnley boy when I wrote my first lines
& the next lot did not come until Carlisle College ten years later
So full of song I went to Barnsley & left a budding poetaster
Perused Byron beneath pines in the pleasant parks of Portsmouth
Then, traversing the continent to the protestant cemetery in Rome,
Found the *silver rose* one glorious sunset above Portovenere
& returned a dedicated spirit to the ancient art of poetry
Exploration of my nation followed, all corners of England's garden
Pluck'd a second silver rose on the hoary heights of Hellvellyn
& found myself directed by the driving lights of Clio & Calliope
Before touring the Raj & finding the kural of mystic Thirruvallavar
To incorporate into sonnet lore, some precious exotic form
Epiphany paving the way for exhibitionisms of epic sonnetry
Afore tripping off to Tuscany, here to crown these youthful years

ABOVE PORTOVENERE

(lancashire)

...così tra questa

*Immensità s'annega il pensiero mio:
E il naufragar me dolce in questo mare*

Giacomo Leopardi

O sacred summit has it been so long
Since last we prosper'd high on cliff-top tall
The sea's papparazi pleasing our song
Lush lullaby,
How years on swift wings fall
Now only slender pockets of our rhyme
Truth-honouring the passages of time

Looking back on this lovely life we chose
When poetic renaissance did renew
These esoterics of the silver rose
O blushing sigh!
Toward this place we drew
Thro all my twenties, as I linger here
The zephyrs of youth's musings disappear.

ON THE VERGE OF THIRTY

(modern)

I'm strollin' tall on the verge o' thirty,
Still feelin' fine, still foxy, still flirty,
Losin' weight on mi tour of Italy,
Stick that up yer middle-age spread!

I was gonna write a look-at-me sonnet
About the things I've done since I was twenty-five
But sack that! Shelley had died by now
Mi best mate's got married at the same age
& Dante had barely finished his Vita Nuova!

So a new life it is & the past is past...

'Cos I'm still thinkin' o' sonnets
& I'm still drinkin' mi wine
Give me life & get me on it,
Now that I am twenty-nine!

UPPER HELL

DANTE

& then I awoke....

My pillow the wing of the Last Pegeasi
Around me grew the pathless shadows of life's dark wood

Three Beasts block my way
Leopard blocks the path clad in light revealing lingerie
Lion fills my ears with fear, roaring modern cacophony
She-wolf eyes my rucksack daring to rid me of money

At the point of defeat I heard a human voice,

"Are you a ghost or are you flesh & blood?"

*"I am the shade of Virgilus of Rome,
Poet to Augustus & the false & lying gods!"*

*"You must take another road & if you follow I will guide you,
The place eternal waits, where shrieking ancients wail for second death
Then he set out & I came on behind him*

DOUBTS

As day departed from the darkling air,
From the conflict & the pity of the way

I drew back fearful

*'O courteous Florentine, whose fame endures eternal,
My faith is in question, am I not fit for this, is going folly?"*

"Refrain from pain,

*Did not Aeneas visit Hades in the flesh
& I myself walk the same, seven centuries ago,
A lady call'd to me, eyes shining brighter than the stars
Her angelic tones lull'd me to guide her wayward grandson*

My courage was returning as those sweet little flowers,
Closed by the chill of night, stem-stand for morning sun,
& I began as one set free.

So stepping forth we entered on the deep & savage way

HELL

THRO ME THE WAY INTO THE WOEFUL CITY
THRO ME THE WAY TO THE ETERNAL PAIN
THRO ME THE WAY AMONG THE LOST PEOPLE
ABANDON ALL HOPE THOSE THAT ENTER HERE

Holding breath I enter a starless gloom,
Sounds like whirlwind-eddying sand surround my head,

Clapping hands * Screams of anguish
Haunted sighs * Lamentations
Loud Wailings * Strange Tongues
Horrible Lingua * Words of Pain

The poet saw me shrink back from those angry tones & said

"Welcome to the Inferno!"

So breathing deeply & holding my breath
I stepp'd into the land that men call Limbo

FERRYMAN

Behind a shifting banner I saw so many people,
A train of wretched shades who miss'd their mark
Neither rebel nor god-fearing, but for themselves
Driven out of heaven, unwelcome in hell
History makes no record for they never were alive

Then I saw a great crowd by a black & loathsome river
& a demon on a hovercraft with eyes of burning coal
"This is the Acheron," said the poet, *"& that is Charon!
Father of the livid marsh, watcher of its river crossing!"*

Souls, like leaves of autumn, ping into his craft
Driven on by divine justice, until the tree drew bare
& as a new crowd gathers while the pilot sped away
A red blaze shone, dark wind struck up, my senses overcome,
I shudder & fall like one seized with sudden sleep

FIRST CIRCLE

Heavy thunder awakens me
Rested eyes survey the Valley of Pain
Deep & dark & blanketed in vapours
The poet turns to me, painted death-pale with pity
"Let us descend into the blind world down there..."

& so we stepped into that abysmal place
Serpent-realms girdling the infernal world
Where countless wailings rise, & sighs forever tremble
Where swell vast crowds of men, women & little children

The Poet turns to me with sad, sad eyes,

*"These did not sin, they have merit enough,
But were born before the harrowing of hell
Faith's gateway by them never meant to know
& so are lost..."*

PAGAN PARK

A blazing light shone beyond that forest of thronging spirits
& we went thither to a noble castle set apart;
Seven walls of intelligence protected from immorality
A gentle stream of eloquence stood watch over the dark
Guarding a gallant tribe, gazes of grand authority
Observe us as we drift there, men like the dashing Aeneas,
Ceasar, Cicero, souls of science & philosophy;
Aristotle, Plato...

then turned back to their playstations
Apart from an old man who came over to greet us
His name was Homer, & we talked of poetry & how
His essence had adapted thro thirty seven centuries,
Our noble school of eagle-song, & when the converse done
We pursued a sloping drawbridge to a place where no light shines.

SECOND CIRCLE

Here Minos stands guard
Horrible, snarling, Judge of the Dead

Encircled by his spiral tail his sinners are hurl'd below
To a place of muted light where a restless, hellish storm
Blows them hither, thither, upward, downward,
Lamenting & blaspheming the great Power of our God

"Who are these condem'd & helpless souls?"

*"These are the carnal sinners that forever reap LUST'S whirlwind
Of a life subjected to their heart's desires
No hope of rest or comfort from the lust which drives their souls"*

Thro battling winds long line of shades pass like hungry cranes,

*"When you abandon yourself to a love that is nothing but love
You are in hell already!"*

Then Dante turned & led me further thro the shrieking gloom

THIRD CIRCLE

Three-headed Cerberus perceives us
Bares bloody fangs, fierce & hideous
Groveling in the sunken mire
About the Great Worm of Hades

"Stand back," said the Tuscan, "I shall take care of him."

My master throws handfuls of dirt into three ravenous gullets
Calming the devouring Beast,

Who mumbling lets us pass to a pitiful place,
Upon this place falls an eternal, cursed rain
Unceasing measure, cold & heavy hail, foul water, snow
Fallen souls lie hungry & helpless in the mud

*"These know a strange & loathsome penalty,
Flesh-loving fools, far from luxurious banquetry,
Yielded their souls to food without spiritual motive!"*

Then we went round that curving road, lost in conversation

PLUTO

We came on Pluto at a point the path fell steep

"Pape Satan, Pape Satan, Aleppe!"

Clucking monotone warning from the old god of Hades,
The baron of Zeus, Lord of the Grecian underworld,
Who once lost his kingdom to the arch-villain's armies,
Not forced into lowly lieutenant-hood

"Pape Satan, Pape Satan, Aleppe!"

Tho a shadow of his former majesty
His bloated visage strikes my soul with fear

"Pape Satan, Pape Satan, Aleppe!"

My Master rants,

"Silence accursed wolf, our journey has been willed on high!"
& as wind-swollen sails fall in a heap when tall masts snap
The cruel beast fell

FOURTH CIRCLE

Passing beyond the whimpering God of Wealth,
We follow the serpentine tail
Scampering down the dismal slope
To where fresh toils founder & pain is newborn

God's justice flings these sinners into wild tormenting whirlpools
Jostling & jousting & duelling with sharp credit cards

"Who are these souls that pierce my heart?"

I asked my master of the Perfect Word

*"They are the hoarders & squanderers of Avarice,
Who embroil'd their lives worshipping material existance,
Now all the gold that ever was beneath the moon
Will never grant them rest!"*

We left that circle & its endless scuffle
To walk on ever deeper thro the flame

NETHER HELL

We descend to a greater wretchedness
Enter marshy STYX beside a gloomy stream,
Gurgling Purple,

This circle's inhabitants are the *Angry*
Smiting each other in the sucking slime
Head, hand & breast

Virgil turns to me & sings,
"These signal wings will sweep us deeper through the grand malign"

Phylegyas crosses this dismal hollow in a dirty, little boat
Single silent oarsmen guides us down a stagnant channel...

Defiant Fallen angels mount approaching iron walls
Our poet pipes a ballad of Christ's harrowing of hell
Whose memory demands those demons let us pass this day

& thus we found unhappy Dis, woeful satanic stronghold

DIS

From tower's top three blood-stain'd furies wail'd
Tesiophore, Alecto & Megaera
Naked-breasted, Hydra-hair'd, black tongues rasping
"Summon Medusa to turn these fools to stone!"

"Turn thy back," said Dante, *"& shut thine eyes
Should the gorgon show herself & trap us here forever!"*

Covering our eyes we hurried on til they were safe to open
Before a flamey plain full of pain & torment
Dire lamentations rising from a host of open tombs

"Who are those buried in those funerary chests?"

*"They are the self-deluding, messianic, arch-heretics
Tardisesque their followers are buried deep beside them"*

Seeing immortal anguish on their writhing faces
I asked my master to avail me of the opportunity
To show me some examples of this betrayal of faith

CULTS

On our way to the centre of the sinful circles
We paus'd in Dis where dwell the anti-messiahs

Dante recogniz'd the Cathars of Provence
But I, more astute to the modern age,
Acknowledged three 'messiahs', buried close together.

Shoko Ashara, First Disciple of Aum,
David Koresh, Grandmaster Dravidian,
& the heathen, bearded Charlie Manson

*"These fools," said Dante, "Are destined to return
To this dark place come the Last & Divine Judgement
In the valley of Jeheshaphet at the end of mortal time -
God may be forgiving but this sin beyond redemption,
Now let us leave this acrid place,"*

& I follow'd him wiser

AT THE EDGE OF THE PIT

Further into the morning star's domain
We found a second Vijayanagar
Scatter'd massive mountains of red & ruin'd rocks

One was thus inscribed,

*'I hold pope Urban II
Whom Adolfus Hitler drew from the straight path'*

Paus'd Dante, *"Soon we shall be among the darkest depths of evil
Come let us rest awhile beside this unbelieving pope."*

"What circle awaits us?" asked I tremblingly

*"Soon we shall be among the violent,
Those to their neighbours, those to themselves & those to God."*

Our spirits scent-adjusted to the vile stench of the devil
We drew a breath of evil air & puked into the Pit
Gunk tumbling down a cliff face, three terraces divided

SICILIAD – nov 2006- feb 2007

BELOW SCOPELLO

(french location)

To become, to belong, bohemian,
So many miles my smitten songsmith sent,
Striving for prospects paradesean
In an immortal moment's monument -

Time carves us this vista Tyhrennean,
Tranquilo corner of a continent,
To become, to belong, bohemian,
So many miles my smitten songsmith sent.

This rocky cove, this tower, this mountain,
Blend in an often prophesied fusion,
Sweet Sicily!

Sat silent & content,
Recently have my dreams increasing seen
Visions of places I had never been
Where I should sit a songsmith & invent

SICILIAN SCHOOL

(acrostic dedication)

S icily! orange-fresh Sicilia,
I n Frederick the Second's timeless time
C astellos court the Magna Curia
I nspiring young nobility to rhyme
L ocal, to the King of Sardinia,
I nternalizing scenery sublime,
A ll in a soft-stone precious sonetta
N ear god their mellow, mellifluous rhyme.

S onnet! puritan storm of poetry
C arv'd from the syntax of a shepherd song
H appily driving sensibility
O ver verses, hurrying minds along
O r losing us amid the mystery
L entini, Inghilfredi, lift among.

ERICE

(oriental vista)

Italia d'oro
Paradiso di pensiero esiliato
Regina di poesia

Sicilia sublime
Cuore di oceano antico
Cucina di cultura

Animata Trapani
Smeraldo del Mediterraneo
Delizia dei pescatori

Magnifiche Egadi;
Farfalla Favignana
Pigro Levanzo

Le onde riflettono il sole
Marettimo risplende in estensione

*Golden Italy, paradise of exiled thought, queen of poetry
Sublime Sicily, heart of ancient ocean, cauldron of culture
Busy Trapani, emerald of the Mediterranean, Fishermen's delight
Magnificent Egadi, butterfly Favignana, lazy Levanzo
Waves reflect the sun, Marettimo spread splendid*

THE BATTLE OF THE EGADI (241 BC)

(heroic history)

Tween Trapani & fair farfallan isle
The fleets of Rome & Carthage meet at last,
The captain of an age the day would prove
& as the tides of battle ebb & flow
A shepherd hears their furious phrenzie
Come nightfall leads his flock toward the shore
The dead's crude stench uprisen with the sun
Heart-wrenching was! A sorry scene of war,
Who is conquer'd, who is the conqueror
He could not tell, a sanguine sea bestrawn
With floating corpses, men condemn'd to die
In hopeless sacrifice, this crimson cove
Would never wash the bloodshed from its rocks,
Like rich red wine adance white, cotton sheets.

ONE DAY IN DECEMBER (2006)

(modern zeitgeist)

Seventy bullets...

The school run stops, pandemonium in Palestine
Gaza City gunmen slay three young brothers
Their high-ranking father inform'd by telephone

Seventy bullets....

Applerow motors, Glasgow, broad daylight
Two gangster gadgies clad in calf-length coats
Screech off to Gorbals in a light blue Mazda

Seventy bullets...

Pinochet meets his maker, Santiago sun sets
Tear-gas canisters disperse jubilant crowds
Acrimonious orphans mourn only injustice

Word from the world shatters my long sabbatical
Unnaccustom'd to its images, like a baby with a gun

THE SEA

(english pastoral)

The sea is a canvas horizon frames
Colours adjusted by aerial cloud,
From dark, stormy lead thro red solar flames
To pleasant pastels heavenish endow'd.

The sea is a life-line for those that farm
Net-dredging from lean runs to purple patch
When sneezing sepia cast out an arm
Over the dying comrades of the catch

The sea is a liquid field of battle
Waves rising to a howling hurricane
Fishermen fight the shaking sail-rattle
Neath flashing lightning & phosperant rain

Here, mankind, truly finds tranquility
On a sea heaving to infinity.

MEMORIUM TO THE PASSAGE OF TIME

(biographical scottish)

Shelley has somehow made my library
& instantly I muse back to that time,
Far from these heady days in Sicily,
When Tuscany *enthubulised* my rhyme,

Remembering that perfect Pisan clime
When Kapitano drank thro our brief fling
By Arno side, & as I sang sublime
He pluck'd our lira like a beggar-king,

I pass'd those sweet siestas composing
Pretences of dining with Byron's crew,
Now summer rises from the finest spring
& nine years on those dreams I had seem true,

Wintering in Sicily's hinterland,
A palace & a pen on either hand.

SHELLEYAN MAXIMS

(philosophical kural)

Study one's heart's inscriptions
Before religious dogma

Wives spend loveliest seasons
Keeping up appearances

How many dissapointing marriages
Linger until death

Men reered on roots
Spurn cruel bloodsport

Murder, robbery, tyranny, bigotry
Fuell'd by liquor

Diets of pure water
Dowse human misadventure

Flesh & fermented beverages
Slow, certain poisons

WHAT BLEEDS FOR FIVE DAYS & DOES NOT DIE?

(couplet ode)

"Varium et mutabile semper"

Virgil

She moans about her hormones every second week in four
Goes clattering the cutlery & slamming every door
Like when we went to Sicily & found a paradise
But she was full of PMT & said, "*It's not THAT nice,*"
Reminding me of Dublin by the whiffy Liffy shore
When all I needed was a spliff, well she just wanted war,
But women are man's reason, so when swings the pendulum
Put on your safety helmet for the fireworks to come -
She sulks & yells, her belly swells, her paranoia grows,
Now fear the snarling werewolf where you once could smell a rose,
Cos' women synch up to the moon, that's just the way things are,
So never say "*irrational,*" or let her drive the car,
Then when the fun is over, son, there's one thing you should do -
Embrace your woman, kiss her lips & whisper, "*I love you!*"

LOVE HEART

(artisan amoretti)

you are
poetic clever
sensual-amusing
sweet-sassy-sharing
warmhearted-caring
adorable-decadent
funny-joyloving
inspirational
kittencute
o baby
I love
you
so
!

THE GRAND TOUR CONTINUED

(lancashire journey)

Ascending Aetna Linguaglossa shrank
From five-year-flow fresh Astralagus grow
Their fathers, further up the northern flank,
Stand with stripp'd birch,
Mist blankets sloping snow,
Feet, round circlet of seven cinder hills,
Defy these fierce & fresh midwinter chills

Salubrious Sartorious behind
Crossing scenes from Saturn centuries cool
This Chestnut of a Hundred Horses find
Natural church,
Lord of life renewel
Long 'fore old Homer walk'd the Trojan shore
Ye thrust a happy sapling through earth's floor.

MARZEMI SUNRISE

(italian dramatic)

As all the sky grew lighter at the change,
With pastel arms, from rich & vivid heart
Emboldening & merging with god's art,
The peachy dawn reach'd round the 'risons' range,
As milk-white sea caressess waves to shore,
Which kisses rock, bows gracefully, takes leave,
Where rising from the lands of make-believe,
The red, all-seeing eye that I adore.

Though you are far away in outer space,
All other images crumble to dust,
Filling with feelings more than love or lust
My humble soul enters that special place
Of two spirits conjoined by nature's hand,
One omnipresent, one a grain of sand.

ITALIAN SEQUANZA

(open poetic)

- 1 Sicilian - Rima Alterna
- 2 Petrarchian - Rima Incatenata
- 3 Envelope - Rima Incatenata
- 4 English - Rima Alterna
- 5 Petrarchian - Rima Alternata
- 6 Sicilian - Rima Incatenata
- 7 English - Rima Incatenata
- 8 Envelope - Rima Alternata
- 9 Sicilian - Rima Italiana
- 10 Petrarchian - Rima Italiana
- 11 Old Sicilian *(as no.1 but end words remain the same)*
- 12 Envelope - Rima Italiana
- 13 English - Rima Italiana
- 14 Own Design *(rhyming scheme of poets choice)*

Octave

Sicilian = abababab

Petrarchian = abbaabba

Envelope = abbaacddc

English = ababcdcd

Sestet

Rima Alterna = xyxyxy

Rima Incatenata = xyzxyz

Rima Italiana = xxyxyy

SICILIAN PROVERBS

(didactic terza)

When cats are away then dances the mouse
Even best friends can leave you in the lurch
Children & chickens will churn up the house

The deeper you hide, the harder you search
Spread your feet as far out as the cover
Better a thief than to blaspheme in church

Each son shines beautiful to his mother
Befriend the lame, soon same ye afflicted
The shoemaker is the barefoot walker

Marital arguments rush into bed
What the young desire the elderly need
The fresh dead teach us how a tear to shed

They stand still who will ne'er on fashion feed
Those who make meat refrain from stealing's greed.

SICILIANO PROVERBE

*Quanno l'atto nun 'e li surci abballono
Lu megghiu amico ti fa lu boia
Ogni figghui pari beddu a mamma so*

*Cui dintra tu melti, fora ti caccia
Stinnicchia lu peri quanto lu linzolu teni
Cu pratica lu zopu all annu zuppichia*

*Megghui arrubari chi santiari
Sciarri di maritu, durano finu a lu lettu
Lu mortu 'n signa a chianciri*

*Lu mastra chi si servi camina scausu
Picciotti e gaddini allor danu la casa
Giovini uzziusu vecchiu bisugnusu*

*Cui fa carni, nun fa robba
Cu fa beni per usanza nenti vali epocu avanza*

ROME

REPUBLICA

Of Rome, renown & immaculate soul
Bright through the mists embalming purple time
Round Tarquinius Superbus in his prime
Grand temples grew, so sewers, too the wall,
As dynasties rise up so they shall fall!
Corrupted kingship consider'd base crime
& as we venture further through my rhyme
Rome's powers in the hands of one & all.

Above the census nests a white eagle
Lusting meat she follows men to battle
Lake Regillus fatigues the Latin League

Clutching warm shanks, her fluffy young to raise,
She returns to the city of intrigue
No finer perch to pass her mortal days.

(from)

THE TWELVE TABLES

The Tarpeian Rock awaits
Spellcraft aggressively pursued

Thirty days debtor's respite
Else slavery sold

Between plebian & patrician
Marriage strictly forbidden

Murdering deform'd children mercifully
Every father's right

Club to death mercilessly
Slanderers & crop stealers

Distribute increasing punishment accordingly
Patrician, plebian, slaves

Justice decrees two killers;
Accidental & intentional

IMPERIUM

Her name preserv'd thro ancient piety
The conquista fresh impetus instils
In tasteless haste a ramshackle shanty
Rose midst these seven salubrious hills
Whose roving legions seize Veii's sweet surround
Detritus of Etrurian domain
While Aequian & Volscian hath found
Rome is the master of the latin plain
As in the turmoil of the Grecian South
The state of slaves convinces victory
With Carthage allied at the Tiber's mouth
Bleeding Phyrus is thrown from Sicily
& says, departing from his Spartan home
What battlefield bequeath'd Carthage & Rome.

CARTHAGE

Rome, allied with the old Acheaen league
Took fields elysian thro bold intrigue
& ending Carthago's vitality
Her eagles sail to raze that great city
& others fly thro wild Cisalpine Gaul
The Alps now form the borders & the wall
Where from the rooftops of Rome's vast demense
An even richer empire can be seen
There's Dacia & Abbyssinia
The precious palaces of Parthia
There's Petra & the steppes of Arabie
Egyptus & the salt of Galilee
These ever fertile verdant leagues of Gaul
Beyond whose shores strange mist-swept isles enthrall...

POMPEY

From the internal furnace that was Rome
Arose a noble genius of arms
Yclad in purple, circensian robes
Gnaeus Pompeius has already purged
Spartacus & the ghouls of Barbarie
Rome celebrates his campaigns in the East
Kings, princes, wives & gen'ral in his tow
Subjects of the latin Alexander;

Armenia, Syria, Judea,
Cilicia & Cappaducia
Treasure chest-on-chest of pirate plunder
Fell to his feats as did they fall to Rome
How wond'rous was the glory of this man
Mused Ceasar from low station midst the crowds

CEASAR

As mortal legends shielded by the fate
That guides them through magnificent vision
A Roman turns his person to a state
Conquers the Gauls, cuckolds the crude Briton
Crosses the Rhine, crushes revolting Spain
& with an army crosses Rubicon
Drives Pompey from the Pharsalian plain
Pursues his cause to Alexandria
Where murder means a dictator must reign!

With dusky enchantress, Cleopatra,
He returns to Rome as an emperor
In all but name, but fame invokes contempt

As daggers drawn by son & senator
Even legends from death-strokes not exempt!

(famous writers)
ON THE ARMS OF ROME

Acquisition nothing without preservation
Usefulness & improvement - Aristotle

Energy, Speed, Resolution, Foresight
Envelop excellent generals - Cicero

Victors ally strategic anticipation
With invincible persistence - Plutarch

Donning your enemies disguise
Detects treasonable sympathies - Frontinus

As sparks begin conflagration
Destroy potential subversives - Rufus

When enemies become profitable
Deem them assets - Xenophon

When deeds are decided
Words rattle needlessly - Aristotle

THE ART OF LOVE
(from Ovid)

Children of cupid note down thy name;
Best you believe all women may be won,
Promise her presents to charm her armour,
Wear rose-fashion'd clothes like men of milieu,
Be aware of your hair & trim thy chin,
Say her face is fair, her eyes are like skies,
Blood warm'd by wine fair spirits flame & flow,
Lust multiplies with each draught that we drink,
Choose not for certain if thy day is drunk
For wine gilds women with looks & laughter,
Speak & with speed, for Venus loves the brave,
& females forced e'en to their true desires,
Then comes the kiss & when passion express'd
There leaves but little rusing for the rest...

9 AD

Thro the Teutoburger Wald went the arms of Varius
Arminius of the Cherusci made his excuses
& soon a ghoulish baritas surrounds the sons of Mars
Chaunting for Lord Tuisto & Odin amidst the stars
The chiefs fighting for victory, companions for their chief
They set out all for slaughter, no quarter & no relief
A black storm rages all around the javelins & spears
The fallen Goths are carried off to dry the widow tears
Three days of carnage rampant in the dark & marshy wood
The roman gen'ral cuts his throat & gurgles on the blood
Some men cast off their armour & await the lethal blow
Only a lucky few would safely reach the Rhine's wide flow
 The news reaches Augustus, flying thro grieving regions;
 "O Quintillius Varius, give me back my legions!"

THE NAZARENE

Gethsemene
Judas rope
Archmagus
Sadly maintain the scandalised Sanhedrim
Leaning their wills upon the Roman whim
The Pilate's orders murder the son of Him
To Calvary
A Crucifix
Sanguinus
Human sin
Son of god
Devils day
Pious fires
Epiphanies

COLLOSEUM

The plans of a great monument unfurl'd
From all parts of the empire dragg'd the stone
To build this spectacular of the world
Where to the heavens fifty thousand borne
& gladiators battle, fiercely will'd
They pit sheer wits for fame & sweet freedom
Or fighting beasts, how thick the hot blood spill'd
As wounded men await the turning thumb
Where in the devil heat of burning flame
The scoundrel Christians are scandalized
Still loyal to the Lamb's immortal name
Good lives now vandalized & victimized,
Much entertainment to the roaring crowd,
With such splendour are emporers endow'd

NERO

How mighty is the music of an art
To those that play, Nero assumes the throne
Setting a space in Rome to sit apart
Palace of gold where pleasure makes ye moan
& eunochs act the lover or the page,
A fire is lit, rips thro the city's rooves
The emporer just fiddles on his stage
Until woken by hot-clattering hooves,
"My lord!" old servant urges him, *"My lord*
You are to be kill'd, by Jupiter flee!"
"I shall not," & so falling on his sword
He utters, *"What an artist dies in me!"*
His death, dark cave, passing without a friend,
Marks the beginning of an empire's end.

LOTHIAD

May 2007-sept-2008

COUNTRY DREAMS

(philospophical terza)

My cities, I leave thee, gritty & grime,
This budding muse prepares the spirit's ark,
Where bird-migration marks the pass of time

What was lifestyle now grey & stranger-stark
Like Guernica or Oranges-sur-Seine,
Once-vivid colours growing daily dark.

This strange occasion wends my thoughts to when
Wordsworth had found a stool to ease his mind
From crowded sensibilities of men

I, too, hope happy harbourage to find
Beside a world of green, where piny glade
By Vallambrosan cardinal design'd

For as Iona's church from wattles made
The forum for a forest made fair trade.

ENTERING LOTHIAN

(open biographical)

The sun has set as steer & stereo
Accompany the roads to Samarkand
& I sing back, renewed lothario
Opens a page & pulls a pen to hand
Enough light is there in this lovely glow
Lighting the mountains of a clansman's land
Some stoic slept, some capp'd with blocks of snow
Being a region ancyent eagles spann'd,
The muse now omnipresent as we go
Past Inverness & Perth as paths were plann'd
Soon moon-diffusing clouds pale lights bestow
On epic structures looming gloom & grand
& entering this new sequanza's flow
We cross the Forth for Queensferry's fair strand.

MEMORIAL TO THE INNOCENT PROTESTERS
 SLAIN IN THE PROTEUS RIOTS
(artisan ode)

t o o t
 r * f l * h
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GLIMMERS OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT
(modern didactic)

Exume the luminary mind
 Of David Hume,
 Edinburgh born

What the mind percieves must melt when time receives
 These faded glipses of what once had been

As sensory impressions become but vague ideas
 Complex or simple be them what they may
 A tapestry of resolution binds all future truths

Grand Athens of the North
 Majestic mental majesty begat the modern mind
 The stench of ecxrement from Riddle's close arose
 With fever'd thought embracing causality & scepticism

Men's minds, embrace these grand immortal philosophs
 Or future days shall never pass made better than before

THE ONLY LAKE IN SCOTLAND

(english pastoral)

With June's long afternoons approaching near
I took a stroll along Pressmennan shore
Tranquil silver sliver, sylvan streams steer
A path to restless Ocean's endless roar,

Which mixes with the rustling trees of May,
Whose freshest greens have framed this river-lake,
Swan family, snow-white & dusky grey,
Reflects them in the glimmer of their wake.

The Squirrel scampers high, the Roe bucks east,
The drunken Bees sup pungent garlic bloom,
On all side elfin forestry releas'd,
As if fairies span Mary's holy loom.

So this is Serendip's pastoral muse,
Far from life's fish-hooks, love-wishes & news.

WHITTINGHAME PARISH LIBRARY

(scottish zeitgeist)

*Composed upon finding a copy of Plato's Republic once
belonging to Arthur Balfour – the prime minister who
made the greatest efforts in creating modern Israel*

Through loss of empire rust-bound books made dust
But for the bibles of the parish pews
Now to my times do tide & time entrust
The nineteenth century, in me renews
The love of brave explorers, & those views
Discovered in a fleshpot, bygone age
When deeds of men predestined by their muse
& dreams of love determined poet's page.

Once, these books left this chrysalisic cage
Palestine-bound, Platonic flutterings
Founded war-crucibles we moderns wage,
All for the progress of the Jewish Kings,

Ink, history & eye equidistant
My butterfly vanish'd in an instant.

TRAPRAIN LAW

(italian vista)

Elevated by the Votadini
We scrambl'd up the Laccolithic side
Found picture frame three hundred sixty wide
Elying vision sweet to each degree.

Beneath rocks of volcanic pimplierie
Dunbar, East Linton, Haddington abide,
Fields reach the Forth & beaches there beside
Or lonely Lammermuir where thought soars free.

I cast mine een along the Garleton ridge
To settle on the far-off Forth Road bridge,
Little with distance, ghostly in the mist.

This is the length of Roman Lothian,
A county home my roaming soul hath won
To recollect when Scottish essence miss'd.

EARL BOTHWELL

(tribute couplet)

In the year of fifteen-ninety since the birth of our lord
His lordship heard King James the sixth was sailing from abroad
So summon'd his black covens to North Berwick's rumbling kirk
& humm'd out for the devil to appraise them in the murk
Gumpowder flash! & soon our hero's skin was sable soot
"The devil," cried the witches witnessing a cloven foot
Our hero pass'd around pin cushion idols of his king
& all there summon'd up a gale tward Norway galloping
But James the Sixth was thick with god, his ship was strong & stout
When safe on shore he swore to smoke that nest of devils out
This wisest fool in christendom interrogates the lot
Thro gloomy clink & pilliewinks unravell'd was the plot
& thus ye fled, Earl Bothwell, far beyond beloved land
Cursing the king in exile, thy vile succubi disband.

BENEDICTUS

(french location)

Go thee to Garvald, go up to Nunraw
Summit of Cistercian activity
Gain'd from the Hayes of Hailes & Traprain Law
& many a Ravenswood dynasty.
Dally, then pass thro the Fortatrice door
Friends enter a centre of sanctity
So go thee to Garvald, seek out Nunraw
Summit of Cistercian activity

As chapel-roof'd cherubim spread their wings
Thro the heraldrics of Christian kings
Far from the golden glow of Gallilee
Fathers offer coffee & compassion
To those souls tired of vices & fashion
Cistercian essence of god's destiny.

AETHALSTANEFORD

(dramatic lancaster)

Dramatis Personae

Angus MacFergus – High King of Alba

Kennith MacAlpin – Prince of Alba

Eochaidh – King of Dalriada

Scene – *The Peffer Valley, 832 AD – King Angus heads a combined army of Picts & Scots, blocking the path of the oncoming Angles led by Aethalstan*

Eochaidh - What think ye, Angus, lord of our command

Your face is furrow'd as a farmer's field

Are ye concern'd with if we should withstand

This fearsome host

Angus – Some strange dream is my shield

For last night good Saint Andrew came to me

Promising survival & victory

MacAlpin – King, look, the way those white clouds cross the blue

Same as the day a saint was crucified

Strung up on Roman wood, your dream comes true

Is this his ghost?

Angus – Come Scotland, unified,

Let us bless Andrew's sainthood & Saltire

Whose eminence shall ever Scots inspire

THE SEIGE OF HADDINGTON

(historical acrostic)

M en of Scotland & France found ancient foe
A broad, not twenty miles from Edinburgh,
R eadying walls with halberd, shield & bow.
Y outh rode beside the proud Queen Dowager
Q uires sung her name, the laddies of the land,
U rged by their princess to highest honour.
E ager brethren form'd mighty battleband!
E astward march'd them, yon Musselburgh, the fray -
N o sassenach such fervour could withstand!
S o many men did fight full well that day,
C ollapsing onto Hadda's ground, their graves
O rdain'd by Death, til D'Esse's dusk dismay,
T hen Scots drifted homeward to work & wives
S howing dark Saxon bloodspots on their knives!

LAMB'S MOOR

(kural journey)

Composed on a two-day walk from Garvoald to Gifford

White Castle's wind-blasted eminence
All Lothian below

Salted Herring Road's highway-code
Passing place pepper'd

Cranshaws watches Whiteadder's wind-waves
Panoramic, microcosmic lakeland

Duns castle's solemn poise
Crows piercing pink-eve

Marches march flanks Dirrington
Salubrious Longformacus's serendipity

Purple-patch'd Lammermuir's muirburnt peak;
Cheviot, Pentland, Cullaloe

Descending toward woodland-hidden Gifford
Birdsongs break silence

IN RESIDENCE

(oriental poetic)

Gorgeous Heather Lodge

This Lothiad of sonnets

Phonetical Spring

Seductive Seasons

Collecting haiku hiking

Carving sonnetry

Dunbar library

Local colour spicing lines;

Witches, Battles, Queens

Poetical scenes

East Lothian exploring

Nook & crannywise

Fresh advances in mine art

Photography poetic

COMMON LAW LOVE

(heroic amoretti)

Even now, after all that love goes through,

From halycon highs to those awful lows

The fact we chose together, sweet Glenda,

Repose in such a fertile land; where fruit

Grows wild - remember gooseberries were found -

Where Falcons vie with Crows to claim the sky,

Where vista-on-vista glows splendidly

Before eyes remember them when they close,

Where Whittinghame Water flows so carefree,

Free as these souls of ours - suppose they met

But they were sleeping – when windy fate blows

Lives grow, so rose us from dim city streets

Like poesy from prose, come cherish this truth.

HAIKU FROM HEATHER LODGE

NEW YEAR

A clear winter's night
Stars frame deep infinity
Owlsong haunts the woods

Night-still country roads
Solitude & creaking trees
Stars & flashing planes

Pimply Lothian
Epic skies & leagues of green
Sunrise nigh unmatched

Misty New Year's Day
Hiking off the hangovers
Promises of snow

Winter's peaceful reclusion
Furyu in sabishisa

JANUARY

Snowflakes a flurry
Nature's cotton candy realm
Bumblng tumbledown!

Woods too cold to walk
Ten minutes - bitter retreat
No Antarctic Scott!

The years first flowers
Miniature metropolis
Whimsical snowdrop!

Deep, drudging winter
Grazing chunky furball sheep
Green fades from the fields

Woolly hats will winter on
Heather Lodge stack'd high with wood

FEBRUARY

Green fields, green tractor
Trawling lines of muddy rouge
Hungry gulls in train

White, saffron, lilac
Skorries Park kaleidoscope
Crocus carnival

Woodland or wasteland?
Lone dead leaf clings to a branch
Dead brown brush beneath

Daffodils explode
Explosions in slow motion
Move the child-like soul

As hard hailstones bruise the cheek
Haiku wrung from all weathers

MARCH

When will winter end?
A wind too wild to walk in
Or swing nine irons

Fertile forest floor
Shoots thrust up round spiky ferns
Gardens start their joy!

Yews yearn for romance
Females hanging single seeds -
Males, sun-bronzed catkins

Nettles start their show
& midst these virgin stingers
Single bumblebees

O glassy handsome landscape
Village greens spread field-on-field!

APRIL

Molehill mountain range
Subterranean violence
Soil-swept volcanoes

Welcome wee calves!
Doglike in thine agile skips
Jigging pig-snouted

Flashes in the grass
Reflections of the sun? no!
Beautiful bluebells

Green tinted treetops
Clint's floral bells – pinks, reds, whites
Rhododendrums rare

Bursting forth like fire-brands
Buttercups scrape pixie sky

MAY

Glorious sun-stream
Gorse gleaming ne'er so golden
Hedgerows gain the gleam

Sunbeams pierce the pane
Seed trays fill the window sills
Little lettuces

Last week all was bare
This week woods are green again
Summer's luscious spread

Adolescent lambs
Mothers shedding winter fleece
Strange, like melting snow

Scratching bats join shuffling mice
Hyperactive Heather Lodge

JUNE

Rabbits everywhere
Panicking before my feet
Catacombing hills

Uugh! Crossfield foot squelch
Cowpat soft in sweating sun
Perpetrators laze

Frantic buzzing spree
Wasp wound up in spider's web
Rescued with a wink

Cute tweeting chicklings
Stoat clings to a garden wall
Nature's sad cycle

Is that horse really dead?
No! a tail swishes a fly

JULY

Wind over wheatfield
Marine reminiscences
Another North Sea

Bats begin the dance
Hawk-eyed buzzard swoops to kill
Catch in talons clutch'd

The serene greenhouse
Full fruits of summer sunblaze
Fourteen tomatoes

Garden thick with flies
Insectoid diaspora
Rainbow sheens & sounds

Whittinghame now Borneo
Tropical Scotch canopy

AUGUST

Something flicks my hair
Daddylonglegs on the roof
Gollywopperworld

Apples on the tree
Reddening & ripening
Young-fall floods the floor

Fruits of the forest
Rosehip syrrip, rasp'ry jam
Bramble bush abloom

Bank holiday bliss
Barbecues & tennis shoes
Geetahs neath the stars

Flocks don Jackets half-inch thick
Heather-clad scattersheep hills

SEPTEMBER

Lush discovery
Carpet of cooking apples
Ready for pastry

Wee spiky sputniks
Playgrounds of champions
Conker carcasses

Wee fruits tint the trees
Elderberry baubelrie
Perfect pies & wines

Fluffy forest floor
Midst lush fernage & branchfall
Mushroom wonderland!

After one last lazy waltz
Silent attic, all bats are flown

OCTOBER

Blackberry tasting
Juice succulent on all sides
Deep-rich & ready

Leaves fill up the lawns
Leaves trailing all through the house
Leaves still clinging tall

Year's first barren tree
Wintry reminiscences
Autumn's leaf lament

These thinning woods
Decaying vegetation
Lines of sniper sight

Feet numb'd by cold tarmac trek
Mental note – boots not trainers!

NOVEMBER

Rustling leaf pile
Scampering midst forest ferns
Squirrels tend their stores

Whirling icy winds
As treetops twist & twindle
Last leaves full of fear

A sharp morning frost
Across the sprinkling snowdust
Robin happily hops

Garden harvest near
Leek & carrot full of life
Lettuces still large

Through one wild & windy night
Many trees made skeletal

DECEMBER

Chocolate calender
Muddy roads & rotting leaves
Drear December's dawn

All-seeing Horus
Far from Sommer's hazy gaze
Wan, weak & wind-worn

Boots break puddle ice
Icy dew bathes all in white
Breath becoming mist

Frozen Pressmennan
Stone clatters cross the surface
Elegant zing-sounds

I catch last leaf twirling earth
Luck must mark the coming year

THE PHEASANT HUNT

Shadows in the woods
Feeding on Lord Balfour's seeds
Gun-doom'd pheasantry

Balfour's bloodhounds bray
Gruff shouts & booming gunfire
Stoat digs underground

Hunters stalk the woods
Clucking pheasants scattering
From a blasted doom

Distant gunshots growl
Gothic, ochre barritas
Blood melts frozen mud

Scampering through undergrowth
Survivors for next month's games

TAMILLIAD

Nov 2008-jan 2009

ON LEAVING FOR INDIA

I came, I saw, I caleigh'd with the Scots
Veni.. vedi... a private victory
My lady swooning to wild lily-knots
Oor homestead settl'd in serenity
Soaking in Scottish sensibility
Itching beyond mere whistle binkie bards
I strove for all that's good in sonnetry
Woodwound, museyon the New Town boulevards,
Where seertitle shines through the teller's cards
& Lothiads dolphin'd upon the stage,
Sturdy as Napoleonic grognards
Peerless as pioneers upon the page.

Now with that host of sonnets safe in store
From Rydal Mounts must makers take their tour.

AMABANDON

To leave a lover is to cleave apart
But as the planets in their orbits sway
Enraptured by the sun's eternal sway
So, too, must move the motions of the heart
All this is why I fix'm my voyage cart
With images od love's resplendent ray
Reminding me that there must come a day
When in conjunctive lines do lives restart

But first I must traverse the overseas
As artists do, for following our fates
All lives change – maybe Im yet to meet her...

Now taking on the tasks of Hercules
I leave your locket at these Tamil gates
Some Ronin, some Rama far from Seeta

LITERARY ARCHEOLOGY

As India rolls on relentlessly
I spare a thought for Thiruvalluvar
His statue at Kannayakamari
His Kural & how I have travell'd far
His poem is to me a polar star
Some guiding light above the Bengal Bay
Where the voice of this avid avatar
Sang with such ease that all the world would say
His was a sublime mind, his was a timeless day.

I find the perfect library
Twelve Thirukkural texts
Such energy pass'd down to me
Each fresh context corrects
His predecessors premises & now a new voice next!

THIRUVANNAMALAI

There is a town the Tamils hold
As holy as a brahmin
Where spicy shops in lanes unfold
& sundry sweets in streets are sold
Where food-stalls vie, both hot & cold
With carts of local farmin'

Now with your hunger satisfied
Stroll through the buzz & bustle
Bus, bike & rickshaw down roads glide
With shop-on-shop stood by their side side
As with a cry bull-whips applied
To oxen of pure muscle

From country quietude an artist flew
Now drown'd in life, downtown Tamil Nadu

MEDITATIONS

The world is changing mate
In the face of fact & feat
Colour-obsession regressing day-by-day

Usain Bolt, Lewis Hamilton - fastest men on the planet
Vishy Anand - chessmaster extraordinaire
& Thro sheer will, skill & luck
Obama comes to fend off world oblivion

& all as black as crows

Like a Rosa Parks sit-in,
Or a Martin Luther march
Far from the Dravidian stigma of varna
When Brahmins could slap him for caste & colour
A youthful Dalit doctor stands & declares

"One day I shall be the Prime Minister of India!"

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Narendra left sleepy Simulia
To realise deep faith, this mortal quest
Brought him to kiss Sri Ramakrishna's feet
Recipient of pure Sansayan force
O lotus bliss, bliss indescribable

Now changing names he roam'd thro all Tibet
Mastering secret Buddhist principles
Then stepping south he put them to the test
On Kannayakamari's sacred rock
Meditating on all his countrymen.

From Himalayan height to these three seas
He saw man's lot just had to be improved
By way of modern practices, & saw
Each creature's soul seam'd by the quartz of god

HAPPY NEW YEAR - 2009

Eight Onges died two weeks ago after drinking spurious hooch
But a boy was born on xmas day bringing the tribe to 93
& what, what of that other tribe by the wide bay of Bengal
The mighty Tamil nation now divided into two
Parted by Adam's bridge, where Hanuman strove for Seeta
The native, mainland Tamil – burning proudly independant
& their Lankan cousins , killing for independance
Whose fate procrastinated at the dawn of the Age of Obama
Exploring Ramashwaram's shores with the mythos of the Ramayana
Listening to Kilinochi as Waterloo entertained Felixstowe
Til the silence speaks volumes...

"The Tiger's have been tamed," bray the international tabloids
"We must now change out tactics," affirmed determined Prabhakaran
Within an hour a sleeper suicide-bomber activated in Colombo

TSU-NA-MI

Remember them fleeing those huge walls of water
That snapp'd them & toss'd them & made bloody piles
In Mamalapuram she search'd for her daughter
A sad scene repeated some three thousand miles

Remember the sounds on the shores of Sri Lanka
The crunching & breaking & snapping & screams
As ships of pig-iron are ripped from the anchor
& pack'd teeming trains flung from bent, steely beams

Remember the mood in the days after Christmas
When so many strangers shall shun the new year
A new doleful sound as the river grows restless
As so many tears crystallize a new fear

As Asia to Africa surged a wild sea
O sing a sad song for the TSU-NA-MI

TAMIL ANIMALS

Pastel Gopura

Monkeys perch'd like mountain goats

Squabbling like humans

Our once proud peacock

Begging at food-stalls for scraps

Far from Kings & Camps

Manless mountainside

Dragonflies dart on the breeze

Butterflies ablaze

Piglet playtime

Scampering thro' foot' thick filth

Young stags ajousting

Nuzzling thro' wild rubbish dumps

Cows, Crows, Goats, Swine, Hens, Dogs, Apes

NALATIYAR

Her :

O lord of fertile land & everflowing waterfalls

O lord of cool sunshine warming ocean's running waves

O lord of good country with beautiful ebony mountains

O lord of flowery hills with lush & sparkling waterfalls

O lord of honey-bearing woods in the good country

O lord of long seashore with fine, unfailing salt-pans

O lord of the hills with lovely sandal groves on

O lord of cool lagoons & bays brimming with water

O lord of prosperous vineyards & huge gem-studded caverns

Him :

O beautiful lady with breasts like budding flowers

O lady of beautiful hair with fragrance of musk

O lady of long-eyed spears & bow-like eyebrows

Him & Her

O lord of bewitching victories bring these beauties to me

CROSSING THE KARVERI DELTA

From India's Niligris water-tanks
Rivers aim plainward

Kabbadi, washerwomen, rickshaw repairs
Madurai's bankside institutions

Thanjavur's impressive mediieval cityscape,
Trichy's towering temple

Kaveri, Coleroon, Arasalar, Mahamakham
Kumbakonam's sacred waterways

Ghostly, seacoast colonial fortress
Idyllic, white-wash'd Tranqbar

Lotus-pool, paddyfield, rainflood, riverine
Wonderful watery world

Kollidam crowns Kaveri's imperium
Pitchivarum's pirhouetting Cu-Co

THE MOTHER ON YOUTH

*"You will become the Person you want to be
Our future is in our own hands
The higher our private aspirations
The higher our realisation
This is the key to youth
Never accepting the irreparable
& with firm resolution follow our true life's aim.*

*Those useless years age us
Contentment beginning the decline
But unquenchable thirst for progress
Keeps us moving 'til our dying day
Those deeming completed tasks
The start of things to come
Will never feel the weight of passing days."*

BASIC TAMIL

- 1 Woner = Wanacum (hello)
- 2 Render = Nan-dray (thanks)
- 3 Mooner = Yevolovum (how much)
- 4 Nar-lee = Rumba Soo-aye (very tasty)
- 5 An-jer = Time Enna (what time is it)
- 6 Ah-roo = Poy-too-varen (see you later)
- 7 Air-lee = Oon Pair Enna (what is your name)
- 8 Eh-ta = Nar England (I am from England)
- 9 Umbodoo = Nalla -kay (cheers)
- 10 Pa-too = Sarry (yes)
- 11 Padi-nooner = Ta-poo (no)
- 12 Panander = Nunbar Nan-dray (grazi raggazi)
- 13 Padi-mooner = Nalamar (how are you)
- 14 Padi-nar-lee = po-dum (full/enough)

TAMIL MEASURE

Each foot a pulse
Each pulse a word

For example all kural
Have seven words

Tamil blank verse
Where each line
Counts the same

Or design myriad stanzas
Of elegant construction
Overloaded with wordplay

Then repeat the structure
This one goes
Four-three-three

This is Tamil Measure!

A PRIME SEQUANZA

February - March 2009

PARADISE BEACH

(pastoral)

Writing in silver light
Enough for Tamil Measure
Full Moon over Paradise
This vista my heaven
Fisher boats have gone
Home through willowing waters
Under hoary jungle cliffs
Palms fringe soft beaches
Halv'd by volcanic outcrop
High waves lap restaurants
Sounds of drummers rise
Dancing upon the sands
This party so wonderful
Music, magic, nudity, stars

KARNATAKAN COAST

(journey)

Beach-hut crowning Paradise Bay
Dolphins, ferrymen, swimmers

Swimitation round rocky outcrops
Mellow Half-moon Beach

Serpentine forest trails arise
Guarding sepia seashore

Om Beach's three-way bullfight
Remarkable mammary bays

Across black volcanic plateaux
Next beach reach'd

Kudle's curve becomes Gokarna
Hiking through cricketers

Cliff-top over miles-long surf
Imagining circling pterodactyls

GOKARNA ROAD

(location)

Last night was paradise
Today open roads
Gokarnan hills lush-landed behind

Third at the station
Jade-eyed Israeli woman
Vivekananda's orange devotee

Tranquil platform filling up
Rickshaws arrive regularly
Hippies singing with guitars

From my university days
A face recognized
That distant conversation remember'd

"Go to India!" he had said
"There let your goddess find you!"

PATNEM

(ode)

Following months of epic travel
I found a delicious beach
Dodging Albion's horrific winter weather
Sun, sea, sand

Natives work the sunsoak'd season
Six-month stinters haunt favourite restaurants
Three-week travellers escape bustling Palolem
Food, surf, sunsets

An ashram for dionysian disciples
Liquid ketamine from Chaudi's chemists
Ecstasy from Curly's Bar Anjuna
Discos, badjis, beer

How we truly love them
These bubbles of pure pleasure

ENTERING MUMBAI

(vista)

Awoken by

“CHI –CHI-CHI”

Dawn breaking over Mumbai

Along the central railway fly

Carriages, travellers, commuter cans & I

Beyond Thane

Myriad apartment blocks

Shanty towns, water towers

Ghatpokar, Lokmanya Tilak, rickshaw roads

Bricks, bikes, blacks, browns, beggars, buses

Buildings bully metropolitan panoramas

Hotels, wholesalers, shoe-shops, bazaars

Downtown Andheri’s demographic energy

Electrifying human vista’s surround

MUMBAI

(zeitgeist)

Thirruvanamalai three months ago,

Flicking through channels – NEWSFLASH

Events unfold riveting

Some real-life Hollywood movie

Modern media – explosions

We all become extras

Terror tour, downtown Mumbai

Taj & Trident – reminiscences

Another neo-historical shrines

Naruman House, newly ominous,

Teenage terrorists - genocide

Leopold Café inspires imagination

We poets are life’s true journalists

But always arrive quite late

INTELLIGENT SHOPPING INTERNATIONAL

(didactic)

Mumbai becomes Amsterdam
Rupees become worthless
No euros either
Early morning numbs staff-sense
Raiding glittering boutiques
English newspapers, football magazines
Toblerones, Crizo, Pepsi

Speedy runs essential
Striking cobra swift
Trust your instinct
Better a busy shop
Obscure your 'goods'
Arms, hats, coats – whatever
Walk out nonchalantly...

BIRMINGHAM

(biographical)

Leafless, bony trees
Concrete India
Grey skies overhead – pensive
Tamil Nadu behind – unreal!
England surrounding
Scotland awaiting
Love's mysterious force – Glenda!
Binding people together

Ward End hike
Backpack book-heavy – rejoice
Tamil texts translated!
Pretty purple crocuses
Heralding the spring – sonneceasar
Completed grand sequanzas

To KAUSHIK SUNDARARAJAN

(tribute)

Six months ago
You visited Heather Lodge
Exotic stranger
Indian & Tamillian
We conversed over supper
Connections made
You were so surprised
To see an Englishman
Enjoying Thirukkural

From such artistic catalysts
Literary adventures born
& finish'd, finally!

So, to thank you with this sonnet
I must visit you in Leeds...

HOMETIME

(philosophical)

Misty morning – Yorkshire
Odsal Top
Hilly Halifax
Familiar roads
Late winter's misty wonder
Inspirational today – sensuous
India has become Calderdale
Paradise Beach now Mytholmroyd
& Patnem, Todmorden
Shivering in many t-shirts!

Burnley aglow beyond Cliviger
Pendle obscured by fog
Bulging in my pocket
Tamil literature's priceless Koh-i-noor

TRANSLATING NALATIYAR

(poetic)

Bodyclock revolving Bombay time
Burnley before dawn
Into freezing northern fog
Tranquil parkland hiking
Toes & fingers numbing
Dawnglow still growing
Tamil texts in Towneley
Ancient Jain gnosis
Thirukkural's esteem'd sacred sister
Baynan & Margosa
Vital lamps lighting all mortality

Converting quatrains into Kural
Miles from Madurai
O remarkable poetical sensibility!

GHOST-STREETS

(historical)

Saturday night drizzle
Walking familiar roads
Whole streets disappearing
Paul Whitehead's house
Risk, Stone Roses
Ready to become rubble
Pleasant Home & Pride
Jamming on acid
Now affordable housing
Downtown's meat market
Bojangles still banging
Memories of brief amourettes

All this a far cry from Gokarna
But still, to me, my lifetime's paradise

ON THE BUSES

(dramatic)

Me

How much to Rawtenstall
One-twenty – thanks a lot

Driver (x43)

Oi this is Manchester
You paid to Rawtenstall

Driver (national express)

Welcome to Tebay services
We leave at three
If ya late ya left behind

Me

How much to Edinburgh mate?
Five-seventy – daylight robbery

Driver (900)

Princes Street is closed
It's the tramworks y' see

Me

Single to East Linton
Three pound bloody twenty
Do you accept rupees?

MY PENELOPE

(amoretti)

Four months have pass'd
Our love's bulb buried
In Whittinghame's fertile soil

Footprints melt snow
Yours hot with Kalahari
Mine with Goan gold

As we gather wood
Springs heralds surround us
Snowdrops opening parachutes
Crocuses of many colours
Chunky pregnant Ewes
Year's first lonely lamb

As Love & life renew
Glenda's tender kiss!