

FEVERED TIMES



WORKS BY JOSEPH SINCLAIR

BOOKS

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FEVERED TIMES

Poetry of the Covid Years

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**This book has been dedicated to the
late James Blair Sherwood in love
and gratitude for the many years of
friendship, support and
encouragement.**

CONTENTS

Foreword	12
Verse	13
Drink to Me Only	14
Once Upon a Time	15
Abstractions	16
Leadership	17
Let Us Then Rejoice	18
Bliss	19
The War of Words	20
The Mainspring of my Life	21
Bye-Bye Boris	22
Sonorous Chimes	23
Living With Covid-19	24
Creation or Cremation	25
And I Went my Way	26
We Live in Fevered Times	27
Hermeneutics	29
Heart on Sleeve	30
Huis Clos	31
Friends of My Bosom	32
Iconoclasm	33
I Love a Poem	34
Indebtedness	35
A Prayer Before Departing	36
Life Abides	36

Lost Dreams	37
My Father and I	38
Love and Onions	38
Interventions	39
Thoughts on Rhinoplasty	40
Serenity	41
A Passing Thought	42
I'm Not Ready for Old Age	43
Out of Chaos Sweet Recall	44
Pandemic	45
Benediction	46
Sound, Soul and Spirit	47
Testimony of a Sinner	48
The Effects of Space and Time	49
A Pivotal Point	50
Reflections	51
The Roots of Our Love	52
Remedies	53
Population Explosion	54
I Was Delusional	56
Vivo Ergo Sum	57
That Was My Fear	58
Ex Nihilo or ex Materia	59
A Diatribe on Obesity	61
It's Not Important	62
No Point in Pi	63
A Zen Riddle	64
The Deserted Ethos	65
The Irony of Poetry	66

Eternity	67
Boris Told Such Dreadful Lies	68
French Verse	72
Carillons impérieux	73
Le champs	73
Advienne que pourra	74
Chagrin	74
Une pensée	74
Vague de protestation	75
La quête noble	75
Le naufragé	77
Ma poésie	77
Petite parodie	78
Pensée poetique	78
Pensée simple	79
Pensée du jour	79
Le mort de covid	79
La tâche	80
Rien n'est plus difficile	80
Métaphore	80
Mise en garde	81
Ne cherche pas mon âme	81
Petite maxime	82
Pensée Zen	82
Point tournant	82
Haikus and other short pieces	83
Haikus	84
Short Pieces	88
Philosophical Postulates	89

FOREWORD

So I am finally getting around to publishing my sixth – and what will definitely be my final – work of poetry. It was delayed by the advent of Covid-19 and a desperate need to work on my long-neglected books of memoirs. These have been a part of my website – though in unpublished form – for a long time, and are now being made accessible while in course of updating and improving. A link has been provided via the Books section of my “conts.com” site and my suddenness in doing this has been a consequence of the spurt of unhappy deaths that I have experienced in the past two years – many of which were of friends and family who featured in the memoirs.

The two books of memoirs are linked and it is simply a lack of time and energy that has stopped me from amalgamating them into one. They are entitled *You Don't Apologise for Chutzpah* a title that was suggested by a comment on my behaviour by the actress and author Maureen Lipman many years ago, and *Uncultured Pearls* adopted from the title of my first book of poetry. A full cast of characters in the memoirs is (or will be eventually) available in the List of Names section of *Uncultured Pearls*.

One final comment is on my dedication to James Sherwood, the wonderful man who left us, alas, last year and who made such a large contribution to my life and experiences during our business relationship and association in many parts of the world during my employment in his Sea Containers group of companies.

Joe Sinclair, Beckenham Kent, September 2022.

VERSE

DRINK TO ME ONLY

No wisenheimer I.
No cracker of feeble jokes.
No smug or arrogant know-it-all.

From the sweet by and by,
My writing skill provokes
A yet malignant protocol.

Not seeing eye-to-eye,
Of different strokes for different folks
Or even too much alcohol.

Oh hic! oh heck! oh hock!

ONCE UPON A TIME

Once upon a time
We believed in the importance of integrity.
Once upon a time
We thought our rulers deserved our trust.
Once upon a time
Honesty was an honoured concept.
Once upon a time
There was a universal, accepted and approved
code of conduct.
Once upon a time . . .
Alas, alas, alas.
No more, no more.

We live unhappily ever after.

ABSTRACTIONS

My world is one of abstractions
described through
analogy and metaphor.

Resolving action into thought
and thought into abstraction
was the teaching of Lao Tzu
and embellished
by Oscar Wilde.

It is over-simplification perhaps
to differentiate them as
intellectual versus ineffectual.
Abstract thinking
requires imagination;
concrete thinking
is based on observation.
But abstract thought has
exposed me to
more concepts than
I had thought possible.

It has helped me to understand
other cultures, other customs,
other ideas;
it has enabled me to consider
other perspectives;

it has fortified my use of
figurative language;
it has provided options for
outside-the-box solutions.

It has enriched me.

LEADERSHIP

Of all our fellow creatures
I really have to say
That the best are not the preachers
But those who light the way.

LET US THEN REJOICE

The secret of longevity
is never to look back.
If we think positively,
we live longer.
We should harbour
no regrets
for past actions taken
or for failures to act,
but should
look to what is left
for us to achieve
in the future.

Thus will we attain
immortality.
And in our search for immortality
we must not forget
that
all flesh is grass.
It's better to die
having made the journey
than to stifle
one's advancement
in the embrace
of adventure unfulfilled

BLISS

I wish I could shake that feeling of loss.
I wish I could recapture that moment of bliss,
that joyous acceptance of rapture
of halcyon days, beatitude, delectation,
euphoria and serenity.

To bathe in a basin of bliss; to enter a state
of bliss.

We never seek bliss, bliss happens.
My spirit-ear listens; my spirit-heart feels;
my blissful search suffers, my spirit-mind heals.
Peace and infinity.

THE WAR OF WORDS

Words are not enough.
Those that are not meaningless
may simply lack importance
or else be capable of
myriad interpretations.
Let us set aside dissimulation
and deception by flattery.
Let's put an end to empty words
or unctuous, or sanctimonious,
holier-than-thou, obsequious,
intended-to-deceive euphemisms.

Words that were the greatest boon
to civilization: that made it possible
for humans to engage in dialogue,
to see inside each other's hearts,
to identify each other's needs
and substantiate our own,
took on, eventually, another role.
Time it is to recognise
how words have now become a tool
for scoundrels to dissemble.
Time it is to liberate the human heart
from language that holds us in thrall.
Time it is to reconnect with our humanity.

THE MAINSPRING OF MY LIFE

The clock has run down.
I console myself with the thought
that twice a day
it shows the right time.

All things run down,
mainsprings wear out
and I shall shortly follow
but I somehow doubt
that I will be okay
twice a day.

BYE-BYE BORIS

We have our exits and our entrances.
It has been said before.
But in the lifelong scheme of things
The next farewell will likely be our last.

The Earth itself will one day die
And return unto its frozen, lifeless state.
A finality that is perhaps not too far off.
Without a sigh, without a whimper
Even without an ultimate warning blast.

We made our entrance, enjoyed our stay,
Played our part in the performance.
And soon it will be time to say goodbye.
Farewell, adieu, exit left or right.
But leave the stage.
Just go!

SONOROUS CHIMES

I have lived in interesting times
I have endured many different climes
Much of my life has been bizarre
But now, calling me from afar,
I begin to hear those compelling chimes.

LIVING WITH COVID-19

I awoke this morning and thought that I was
dead.

Not a sound could be heard; not a breath of air
Could be felt. “So this is how it ends” I thought
“Not with a bang, not with a whimper,
But with a dreadful solemn silence;
With a ghastly breathless stillness”.

And then I replaced the devices in my ear,
And conducted my matutinal ablutions,
And was restored to life. Prepared to face
Another dull, disturbing, Covid-driven day.

CREATION OR CREMATION?

Creation was an engineered design
and, if we are to believe the Scriptures,
planning preceded execution.
Since when there's been no ceased attempt
to improve the initial configuration.

Biodiversity, extinction, reproduction,
new designs, new genesis, new formulation,
but who is the new engineer?
And what ulterior motive
stimulates the new creation?

The dinosaurs (and they were not the first!)
preceded the birds and the bees.
Nature needed no stimulation
beyond mankind's inbred desire
To encourage or restrain procreation.

And now we have seemingly learned
by trial – but more by error –
how simple it is to fashion anew
an environmental disaster
with the portent of universal dissipation.

We have the statesmen and politicians
to thank for our lemming-like rush

to oblivion. The next metamorphosis
may be the last – at least in human terms
without transubstantiation.

In linguistics
and in politics,
it's a really small step
from creation to cremation.

AND I WENT MY WAY

It was eleven years ago
He briefly paid a visit;
Different strokes, as they say,
For different folks.
His hand rested lightly
On my shoulder;
Then the hint of a shrug.
He turned his back on me,
Sighed a sad farewell . . .
And I went my way.

WE LIVE IN FEVERED TIMES

It is a time of great change,
A time of revolt and revolution:
Political, social, artistic
And, alas, it would seem
Nature has decided to take a hand.
We no longer measure time by clocks
Nor calendars.
Time now moves in stages
Of disaster after disaster.
Disease, decay, and dissolution.
It has become a moveable feast
To nourish the soul.
A parable.
Method into metaphor.
Metaphor into madness.
It does not suffice to enhance
A universal truth.
History repeats itself;
Historians exaggerate.
Repetition alone does not create a parable.
Repetition is not reinforcement.

I try to put this into context:
A poet should be his own critic.
Poetry is the language of feeling
Science is the language of being.
We can leave it to the scientists

To determine the truth of outer reality,
With limited choices available at journey's end.
We too feel we need to make a choice
But the choice for us is always between evils
Each more devilish than the last.
What is the road upon which I should be
travelling?
What choices will be available to me at the
end of my personal journey?

We were in the same place a century ago,
Our leaders then had different faces.
They wore different clothes and different masks.
Yet today they are essentially the same.
From conception through deception,
Ill-intentioned and ill-advised.
Trumpism is anarchist, nihilist and surréaliste.
Moral grandeur and courage are as much to
be prized
And as little to be found now as then.
There is a kind of feverish madness in the world
today.
We stand between Heaven and Hell
In that bleak place
Where no heart beats
Where no clock ticks.
The spirit that inhabits here
Does nothing to appease my doubts.
And at the end of the road, just as I thought,
Every sum will prove divisible by nought.

HERMENEUTICS

She looked at me with granite eyes
peering over puffball cheeks,
and I continue to despise
the craftiness of her techniques.

How do I tell the truth from lies
each time she speaks?

HEART ON SLEEVE

She wore her heart upon her sleeve
displayed, though vaguely risible,
with no intention to deceive,
her love spilled out naively visible.

The path was dark
hushed were the twitters of her beloved birds:
silent dove and muted lark.
She wore her heart upon her sleeve,
and unheard were her dying words:
“I believe”.

HUIS CLOS

I strain my ear
to hear
a song that has never been written.
To hear it I need to explore
the innermost depths of my soul.
The song is me
and if I do not know it,
then how can I know myself?
And if I do not know myself,
how can I know another?

FRIENDS OF MY BOSOM

At my age, friends become fewer,
and those that remain
are all the more venerated.
It is becoming harder and harder
to recall that time
when older people were revered.
As time passes, so do the elderly,
and the contemporaries
that are with us, slowly diminish.

There comes a time in life
when we become uncomfortably aware
that we are outliving our friends.
I feel I want to say please bide awhile,
do not desert me at a time
when there are so few of you left.
What is this discomfort that I feel
when I outlive a friend?
Surely the guilt should belong
to the one leaving me?

ICONOCLASM

What I really deplore and deprecate in our
society
is growing evidence of the spread of iconoclasm.
It is not enough apparently to seek to improve
our own condition. We are made happiest
by our ability to destroy the reputation of others.

Personally, I will never seek to promote my
happiness
by denying other people theirs.
So don't tell me I should be satisfied with my lot.

Don't preach to the converted.

I LOVE A POEM

I love a poem
and feel better for
a verse that's
full of metaphor,
But egoism's
not the same as symbolism.

I love a poem.
One that scans.
But must confess
That I may overstress
in metric heat
the use of feet.

I love a poem.
One that rhymes.
But must admit that
there are times
When I go a bit too far
From the sublime to the bizarre.

INDEBTEDNESS

Because you did not hesitate to give
Your heart and soul wholeheartedly to me,
Because you helped to keep my dreams alive,
And were wherever you had need to be,

I shall remember everything you said
And everything you did on my behalf,
It will remain for me the fountainhead
And be my beating heart's oscillograph.

And reaching back across the passing years
Of trials and sufferings and loss untold,
I'll not forget how well you stilled my fears,
A willing prisoner to your stranglehold.

LIFE ABIDES

If the dead can hear the living
albeit for a while
then this they know:
“You have not left us,
you have not gone away;
you rest as firm
as some long-planted tree.”
Here.
Now.
Forever.

A PRAYER BEFORE DEPARTING

Withdraw the baseless accusation of malignity,
Now that I am old enough to die with dignity.

LOST DREAMS

Lost in the mists of time the martyrdom of
memory
hides in the shadows of a million lives,
displaying and disprizing childish antics
whose hidden depths refuse to be revealed.

“We are gone,” they say, “never to be
recaptured.
“We have spread our wings and flown
far beyond the stinking, sprawling mass of
dreams
that distort all your disdainful and ambitious
advocacy”.

You have drunk from the vessel of rejuvenation;
you have supped from the wildness of sweet
oats;
you have measured all those carnal, earthy treads
and disposed your body’s needs in countless
ways.

And now must time’s relentlessly unyielding
delimitation of the pleasures of the flesh
provide no more than a delightful interruptus
to that orgasmic coitus as once defined the past.

MY FATHER AND I

I had the shock of my life when I saw my late
father
walking towards me.
And then I realised that I was looking at myself
in the windows of a shop front.

It got me thinking.
Perhaps I am really my father!
And that thought led to another:
If my father had been born
A quarter of a century later
He would have been me!

LOVE AND ONIONS

There are different levels of love
as there are different layers of onion,
and the trick is to peel the layers
whilst retaining the essence.

Be it of love or onions.

INTERVENTIONS

Now lend an ear, and harken to the sound
That someone else's words add to debate.
And if you can restrain impatient need
To add your worthwhile (or your worthless)
Comments to the wealth of wisdom here
displayed,
You may learn something to enhance your futile
life.

THOUGHTS ON RHINOPLASTY

After my initial exuberance
At the sight of my reformed protuberance
I decided after due consideration
It was not so much a reformation
As a character assassination
You might say that my proboscis
Has not improved with its meiosis.

SERENITY

Each time our paths should chance to cross
my heart seems to expand as if
it might burst the cavity of my chest;
and I am left with the heavenly glow
as of vessels ploughing serenely
through the purple velvet of the night.

A PASSING THOUGHT

I disengage the padlock of my mind
allowing thoughts free access
to what lurks behind the spread
of undisclosed agendas
and secrets unconfined.

I'M NOT READY FOR OLD AGE

Please keep it at bay.
It creeps up on you.
Relentlessly, imperceptibly.
Until you feel trapped;
Held in a sticky
Gossamer web.

That's for older folk, I think,
That's for those who have passed
the point of no return.
It's not for me.
I'm barely into my nineties.

I'm not ready for old age.

OUT OF CHAOS SWEET RECALL

You ask me if I still remember what you meant
to me
in those brightly golden days
that filled tumultuous lives with wondrous hopes,
undaunted by the death and dark destruction
that existed far removed from
our immediate ken.

And now, and now in
these benighted
topsy-turvy times when
love lies bleeding
in the urban battlefields
that are our personal birthright,
and our inheritance
of that early
insouciant disdain.

Will we still remember fantasies and dreams
transmogrified
into harsh reality,
or hopes that never were fulfilled,
with nothing left but fading scraps of paper or a
tape or two and no instrument to play them on?

PANDEMIC

To what purpose
has this curse
been visited upon
a deaf and blind
and uninterested
world?

*** **

They're not
uninterested now!

BENEDICTION

For one
who so long lived
in self-imposed isolation,
the arrival of a mandate
that insisted on separation
from others
was no hardship.

Indeed it was almost
a benediction

How bad can it get?
The answer whispered
on the wind
“You have no idea. . . “

None but those that have endured
the enormity of loss
can know the full perspective
of that fear.

SOUND, SOUL, AND SPIRIT

A mournful
Waterfall
Of sound.
A gentle
Susurration.
A sad cascade
Reverberates
In timeless
Melody
And tuneless
Tempo.
Disturbs
My soul
And disconcerts
My spirit.

TESTIMONY OF A SINNER

I am unrepentant.
Give me a sin to struggle with.
I am one of the unconverted
who happily abjures all piety
and seeks no arbitrary grace.

Please do not express a fervent hope
That I be brought to shame
by my depravity.

I seek no salvation, nor do I wish
to control my heinous urges;
I shall fulfil my own distasteful destiny.
I seek no redemption but prefer
to remain one of the unregenerate.

I seek no forgiveness
For I have forgiven myself,
and remain unrepentant.

THE EFFECTS OF SPACE AND TIME

For years I have suspected that I may be living
in a parallel universe.
This is a suspicion that has been reinforced
over the decades
by the continual depletion of my contemporaries.

And now I must ask myself:
if it is indeed true that I am on a different
continuum
of space and time from all those others
who have formed a part of my existence,
then perhaps I am also responsible for its decline.

If, by the power of my thought,
by the essence of my existence, I am the
progenitor
of the series of catastrophes, calamities, and
cataclysms

that continually clapperclaw my world,
then perhaps I can also bring a sense of calm.

And if I do not choose to do so,
if I allow, by my own negligence,
that catalogue of crime to be unleashed
against a helpless world,
then am I not the culprit?
It is a chilling thought.

A PIVOTAL POINT

As I make my progress through life
I am aware constantly
Of the need for answers
and I am equally aware
that I have not been asking
the right questions.

REFLECTIONS

What does the mirror show
When I move away?
How can I be sure that my
Reflection moves away with me?
If not, then the next viewer
Will see my face
And not their own.

How terrifying!

THE ROOTS OF OUR LOVE

The love we share may have deep roots;
the branches of the love we share
may exceed the length of those roots;
my arms may stretch out and enfold you
as the branches of a tree
may embrace whatever they hold captive.

We may stand together as tall
as the depth of the roots of our love.
But the roots of our love may extend
beyond the length of its branches.

REMEDIES

We believe that by identifying symptoms
we thereby succeed in curing cause.
The name is as irrelevant as the menu is the
meal.
We need to seek the mainspring of our malady.

We thought we had found the fountain of youth
but it was a mere trickle
that vanished to a barren waste
as we tried to bathe beneath it.

The difficulty is to find a cure
as elusive as the alchemist's gold
or the scientist's discovery
of a perpetual motion machine.

POPULATION EXPLOSION

They keep us all alive these days
by potions and procedures.
They hold at bay the encroach
of debilitating and enfeebling
symptoms which,
in an earlier age,
announced
the sad but unsurprising
advent of a pain-obliterating Death.

This surely is a good thing;
it allows us to persevere
with projects
that had previously to be abandoned
uncompleted,
unfulfilled.
But does it enhance the quality of life?

What can be done
to balance the numbers emanating
from the extension of old age
and the expanding
population of
certain Asian lands?

We need to find a way to
control birth in the East,
or revert to an age
of earlier demise
in the West.
We can no longer get away with both.

Knowing that I'm adding to
the expanding
population
simply adds to my concern.

I WAS DELUSIONAL

I thought I needed your love
and hoped you needed mine.
I was delusional.
Greater by far to acknowledge desire,
and not to confuse wants with needs.

We all need strokes
but they come from within
and what is best to avoid
is the confusion
of the trigger for the bullet.

VIVO ERGO SUM

No one dies completely.
No one, no matter how small,
How insignificant,
Has not touched or been touched
By others in the course
Of their lives.

No one no matter how abject
Or nondescript has failed to
To have some impact
However minor on someone
Who has accosted them,
Or nurtured them.

I challenge anyone to deny
The possibility that figures
Appearing in our dreams
May not be the spirits or the souls
Of actual figures from the past,
Determined that they will be
Remembered.

THAT WAS MY FEAR

This was my fear:
That when I strove to move
Those visions in the night
My friends might overhear
The hidden thoughts I'd love
To banish from my sight.

This was my fear:
That what I thought I'd lost
Was merely out of view
And terror in my drear
Despair at any cost
To face it all anew.

This was my fear:
That anger leads to hate
And hate leads to self-harm.
Each vengeful act so dear,
And each accusing spite,
Eliminates my calm,

Destroys my self-esteem
And makes me feel like shit,
My wish to be austere,
Shatters each dusty dream
Dismays me not one bit.
That was my fear

EX NIHILO OR EX MATERIA?

Where did it come from? Where will it go?
I pose the questions, I listen for the answers,
and hear nothing but sibilance
in my defective auditory sense.
But answers there are . . . I know.

Nature has always given the response
That echoed in the nightfall of my soul.
It began in those excursions as a child
and gathered pace in wartime's exodus,
'midst shattering of peace and of belief.
'Twas ever thus, to walk upon the Sussex
Downs,
The Surrey Hills, the Essex flats,
To feel the wind upon my cheeks
The song of birdcalls in the air,
And life so full of radiance and joy.

'Twas ever thus, the yearly trips
To Devon's headlands and to Cornish beaches.
The voyages across the seas,
the sojourns in yet more distant lands.
Exultation with exheredation.

Decades of travelling, seeking the answers,
so much of the time forgetting the questions;
journeying hither and yon, tracing the clouds
following their dreams, and mine, on shimmering
shores,
discovering the sweetness of life grown sour.

And through it all I have known love,
excessively,
and never cautiously enough. A spendthrift
wasting all the wealth of praise and acclamation
in luxuriant homage to his own dissipation,
sleeping with salvation and waking in confusion.

And now, the twilight of a life grown weary
in a constant yet inconstant search for answers,
at last gives way to calamitous acceptance
of the eternal verity. Ex nihilo is nonsense;
we have no option but to embrace ex materia.

A DIATRIBE ON OBESITY

In a fast-food establishment
I sat before my plastic tray
of great hamburger,
crisp French fries
and quite delicious chocolate shake.

When all at once
I did espy
A pudding man, with pudding wife
and their two doughy children
stuffing their pudding faces.

Obesity, the modern scourge.
How did we encourage it,
I asked myself,
before the advent
of the fast-food chains?

Before the coming
of McDonald's and the KFC
how did we succour
anorexia, bulimia, and diaphragm activity,
and so much mortal, morbid, disability?

*[And just to make sure that we didn't miss out on
these delicious fattening morsels, they introduced
the internet and asked us to accept all cookies.]*

IT'S NOT IMPORTANT!

I used to dispose myself
of matters thought essential
until I met a master
of zen Buddhism
who introduced me
to vast concepts
based upon so many
minor, unimportant things
that used to be regarded
as completely
inconsequential.

And now my spirit
has developed
along diverse
and abstract
quite disparate lines.
No longer am I influenced
by matters prejudicial
so long as I can dismiss them
as purely superficial.

NO POINT IN PI

Thomas Carlyle said
the present is the living sum total
of the whole past.

Now, when I look back
over the history
that is the sum total
of my life,
there are aspects
that are hard to
fathom.

There are black holes
where one might expect
to encounter
a white hole's event horizon,
while other events
have apparently failed
to intersect
my preferred boundaries.
Arithmetic's never been my strength
and I suspect that
at one stage or another
I may have
put a decimal point in
the wrong place.

A ZEN RIDDLE

Should you ask me
what it is I search for,
I will be obliged to
answer: "The truth".
Should you then ask me,
"What is the truth?"
I will be obliged to
answer "I have not yet found it."

How will I know
when I have found it?
Is the truth
self-evident?

I will discard
everything that is not the truth,
and what remains,
however unlikely,
will be the truth.
Or possibly it will not be the truth.

THE DESERTED ETHOS

Ill fares the land
Where statesmen do transgress;
Where sin soars out of hand
and honour does regress,
and we value honour
less and less.

Parody based on Oliver Goldsmith's

The Deserted Village – 1770

THE IRONY OF POETRY

I await delivery of my trial hearing aids
That will incorporate all the latest features
And will thus expose my thoughts to previously
Unimaginable utterances.
And I am suddenly and delightedly aware
That the poetry that has always entranced my
heart
May, in future, equally enchant my ears.

ETERNITY

Eternal peace I sought, in eternal solitude.
Yet eternity is timeless and it is endless.
When we talk of killing time
We are suggesting an end of eternal life.
But we are in it; we are of it;
We cannot end it; it is part of each moment.
It will, by definition, continue evermore.

What a comforting thought.

BORIS TOLD SUCH DREADFUL LIES*

Oh, Boris told such dreadful lies,
One just gazed wide-eyed at the skies,
Astounded at support from these
Parliamentary colleagues
Who rallied to their leader's cause,
Secure in the male menopause.

Gove, Michael, who was quite gung-ho
Wanted to believe him, though
In trying to maintain his credence
While avoiding intercedence
Got his knickers in a twist
Which hardly pleased a hedonist.
But may have done so, had not he
Been faced with obvious perfidy.
For once, towards the end of work
He realised that the stupid berk
Had joined a party out-of-doors,
Knowing there was nothing worse,
But given the alternative,
Was doggedly conservative.

While as for dear effete Rees Mogg
Whose mind was often in a fog,
Though evidently of good breeding,
Slept through parliament's proceeding.
And in The Mogg Cast Jacob wrote
"Unquestionably" – and I quote:
"The PM is an honest man".
What brave words from a loyal fan.

He seemed to share with Donald Trump
A failure to maintain the rump
Of his supporters who only lasted
So long as he felt they could be trusted.
Thus Priti Patel with whom, besotted
He must have been, for when she blotted
Her copy book, he kept her in
The Cabinet, despite a sin
That others, far beneath her station,
To leave had had no hesitation.

But once, towards the close of day
Hearing merry sounds of play,
Bojo took his health in hand
Ignoring rules from his command.
"No-one tells me what to do"
Quoth he, "I'm off to have a few."
"Allow me, please, to beg your pardon
And join my colleagues in the garden."

It was not long before a tide
Of censure came from every side.
From Kensington and Camden Town,
From Aberdeen and County Down.
The premier has been found out
As if there could be any doubt,
For, after all, his lying skills
Had long replenished the gristmills.

When young he suffered from glue ear
So, what he did not want to hear
In later life, he could ignore
And simply choose to underscore
His frequent absurd recklessness
On the misfortune of deafness.

At Oxford in the Bullingdon
His drunkenness was quite well-known.
His early exploits as a Yuppy;
Flirtation then with Darius Guppy.
As editor of the Sextator
With thanks, doubtless, to his Creator
More flirtations, some quite grave;
“Who, sir? Me, sir? I’m no knave”
But Petronella at his back
Could not avoid the sack by Black.
Earlier it was the Times;
Distortions were his major crimes.

And, finally, to Downing Street
Where the circle is now complete,
Surrounded by his faithful lackeys,
Standing up for the Iraqis,
Risking the enmity of Cumming
Whose Durham trip was unbecoming,
Though not condemned at all by Boris
As extinct as a brontosaurus.

His lies have not grown any sweeter
They've more in common with a foetor,
When embarrassment heads his way
He simply takes off for the day:
"Sorry for this Obfuscation
I have to go to King's Cross station
To provide a possible disclaimer
For my absence from the Chamber."

**•A BELLOC PARODY WITH APOLOGIES
TO MATILDA WHO TOLD SUCH
DREADFUL LIES**

FRENCH VERSE

CARILLONS IMPÉRIEUX

J'ai vécu dans des périodes soucieux.
J'ai supporté de nombreux climats odieux
et j'ai toujours pris grand soin,
mais en ce moment, m'appelant de loin,
je commence à entendre ces carillons impérieux.

LE CHAMPS

Verdure
Si pure
Dégringole
La longueur de la colline
Et moi, j'y reste
Bouche mi-ouverte
En stupéfaction

ADVIENNE QUE POURRA

Dormir avec ta main entre mes cuisses
Je sens ton cœur battre sous ma langue.
Dormir ne suffit pas à te rendre reel.

CHAGRIN

Enfin j'ai accompli
Ce que j'avais toujours voulu!
Et je ne le voulais plus!

UNE PENSÉE

Un instant de la folie
peut être pire
qu'une vie de
la démence.

VAGUE DE PROTÉSTATION

Vous ne connaissez pas ni pouvez sentir mon
amertume
avec la mort d'un seul enfant
ou la perte d'une simple goutte de sang.
Je déteste la souffrance d'un peuple innocent
je déplore la perte des vies humaines
Je pleure pour un pays.
je suis en deuil d'un peuple entier.

LA QUÊTE NOBLE

Le voyage le plus dangereux
est celui qui existe hors de nous
mais c'est le voyage
qu'on doit d'abord prendre
si on cherche la vérité.

Le voyage le plus important
est celui qu'on prend
dans le bateau de notre corps
qui porte le drapeau
d'une quête noble.

Lorsque nous voyageons par
l'enchevêtrement de notre esprit,
il faut prendre soin
à ne pas mal interprété
des signes les plus claires.

Quelle distance faut il voyager?
D 'où faut il commencer?
Chaque voyage, comme on dit,
commence avec un seul pas:
un pied devant l'autre.

La prédisposition sera toujours
de détourner le regard

comme un aigle dans les cieux
par ci, par là et partout.
Pourtant il faut nous méfier
Au-delà de cette
limite habitent
les dragons.

LE NAUFRAGÉ

Je me noie
sous une mer de mots.
Je suis un naufragé
du lexique.

MA POÉSIE

J'écris la poésie et la prose.
Si vous cherchez ma poésie
Vous la trouverez
Entre les lignes de ma prose.

PETITE PARODIE D'APRÈS LES DJINNS DE HUGO

Boursin
Roquefort
Fromage
Très fort
Mère Rose
Compose
La prose
Quel sport!

PENSÉE POÉTIQUE

Les mots qui constituent ma poésie
ne sont pas les mots de ma tête
mais les mots de mon coeur.
Si'l y en a des erreurs
ce n'est pas à cause des pensées abîmées,
mais d'un coeur brisé.

PENSÉE SIMPLE

J'espère que je ne serai jamais trop vieux
pour me comporter de manière puerile
ou trop sage
pour me comporter de manière cinglée.

PENSÉE DU JOUR

La sottise est une maladie
pour laquelle il n'y a pas de vaccin.

LA MORT DE COVID

Je me suis réveillé ce matin.
Subitement!
Et tout était silenc.
Pas un seul bruit
c'était un silence de mort.
Et je me suis demandé:
Est-ce que c'est moi qui est mort?

LA TÂCHE – DOULEUR OU PLAISIR

Vous avez toujours un simple choix:
effectuer une tâche
ou prenez plaisir dans le voyage.
C'est à vous de choisir.

RIEN N'EST PLUS DIFFICILE

Les murs qui cachent
les origines de la liberté
des hommes
s'attachent aux espoirs.

MÉTAPHORE

N'oublies jamais qu'il y en a
parmi des habitants du monde
qui déplorent la perte des fleurs,
des autres qui apprécient
la croissance des mauvaises herbes.

MISE EN GARDE

Si on hésite à prendre une décision,
il me semble
qu'il vaut mieux
pécher par excès de prudence,
(qui est mère de sûreté),
que de dépêcher
par vitesse de réaction,
qui est frère de désastre.

NE CHERCHE PAS MON ÂME

J'ai laissé une partie de mon âme
à chaque endroit que j'ai habité
et j'ai vécu dans
plusieurs endroits.
Ce que je me demande maintenant
c'est qu'est ce qu'il me reste
de mon âme?
Et où cela se trouve?

PETITE MAXIME

Je suis un personnage chimérique
Je cherche toujours un mal à combattre.

PENSÉE ZEN

Les mots que j'emploie
Ne sont pas meilleurs
Que ceux de n'importe autre poète.
Mais les espaces entre les mots
Les espaces alors!
C'est là où demeure ma vraie poésie.

POINT TOURNANT

En faisant mon chemin dans la vie
je suis souvent conscient
de la possibilité
que ce ne sont pas les réponses
que je reçois qui sont fausses
mais les questions que j'ai posées.

**HAIKUS
AND
OTHER SHORT PIECES**

HAIKUS

So, I make mistakes!
But I'm happy to do so.
If you learn from them.

Each time I re-read
Something I wrote long ago
I'm closer to me

To be possessed of
The wisdom of youth and the
Vigour of old age.

Seek if you would find
But seek not too intently
That way madness lies

I finally got what
I had for so long sought.
And did not want it.

Contempt alas is
All too often the price paid
For being honest.

I cannot recall
any regrets consequent
on having said "Yes".

Do not resist change;
It is inevitable.
Resist being changed!

I would exchange the
Entire output of my life
For one perfect word.

Success is not judged
By what you got out of it
But what you gave up.

Be kind to yourself
And be kind to all creatures
As well as the earth.

Disputes with loved ones
Should be held to the present.
Don't bring up the past.

Be considerate.
Do not respond in anger
But maintain your calm.

Success has been mine
If just one line of my verse
Lasts one hundred years.

Do not compromise.
Never choose the easy way
But gird up your loins.

Firstly we collide
Before we make a breakthrough
And then we collude.

Ice cap vanishes
Imperceptibly from view
The rest is silence.

Truth is paramount.
Avoid all embellishment.
Honesty must prevail.

Not to cause alarm,
My cat proceeds stealthily.
But purr-posefully

Celebrate solstice
In Autumn hours get longer
Hip, hip, hip, hooray!

A phlebotomy
Is far less to be feared than
A lobotomy.

SHORT PIECES

THEY CALL IT THERAPY!

Neurotics talk to their analysts,
Sinners talk to their priests
Hypochondriacs visit their doctors
Writers write

TESTAMENT TO BUFFOONERY

I was born wise
and have spent the better part of a century
trying to constrain
buffoonery.

RHUBARB, RHUBARB

The lies of Boris born
Were sent to mock us.
They fed us milk of Capricorn
And not the lactococcus.

PHILOSOPHICAL POSTULATES

Sometimes, surrendering has nothing to do with weakness, and everything to do with strength. We give up and walk away not because we want others to acknowledge our value, but because we finally appreciate our own worth.

OOO

Be aware that if you do not control your feelings, they may end up controlling you.

OOO

Every moment spent feeling so annoyed
at anything I may have lost,
might better be employed
in celebrating all those wondrous moments
that I have enjoyed.

OOO

Humiliation suffered in one's childhood may affect one's whole life.

The words I use are no better than those of any
other poet, but the spaces between the words . . .
The spaces . . . aah, those are my poetry.
If only it were possible to hold a mirror to my
mind and try to ascertain if the image it portrays
is true or a distortion.

OOO

I used to hate the thorns on my rose bush.
Then I discovered a thorn bush that bore roses.

OOO

When we share our thoughts,
I feel closer to you.
But I also feel closer to me.

OOO

I do not need a thousand words
my feelings to reveal.
One look alone is all I need
to show you how I feel.

OOO

What a pity there's no vaccine for stupidity!