

# **WHISTLING IN THE WIND**



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*The Pit Digger*  
*The Bahrat Tender*  
*Your Humble Investigator* (a TV series in collaboration with Lory  
Alder comprising: *Chase the Ace*, *Special Twist*, *Crooks' Tour*).

### MUSICAL COMEDY

*Two Hours of Happiness* (in collaboration with Malcolm Knight)

# **WHISTLING IN THE WIND**

**A collection of poetry  
from 2019**

**by**

**Joseph Sinclair**

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The East Wind, 1918

**This book is dedicated to  
My Family  
with deepest love.**

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## **FOREWORD**

The intention was to publish this collection of poetry written in 2019 during the first quarter of 2020.

Honouring the best laid plans of the Scottish bard, Covid-19 arrived to trivialise such an event, and delay publication until normality had been restored. Only you, dear reader, may know whether and when that had happened and whether or not it had preceded or followed my demise.

**Part I**  
**ENGLISH VERSE**

# I'M NOT DONE YET

Those friends who knew me years ago before  
our ways diverged, may recollect  
how tempered was my intellect though  
rivalry emerged  
whenever cricket bat or tennis racquet  
were flourished in a hand  
that nowadays  
is more prone to dismember  
a fine Chateaubriand.

Tennis alas is of the past  
and there, I fear, must bide,  
but other sports and pastimes  
I can still perform with pride.

So please set out those winks  
that I may tiddle.  
Dust off those mallets,  
balls and hoops,  
I'm not one of your nincompoops  
and need no Queen's flamingo to  
win without a taradiddle. Or we  
could turn to bingo.

Then there are those of intellect  
who might like bridge or chess,  
though possibly in retrospect  
It's best to acquiesce.

Ludo, Trivial Pursuits  
and even Snakes and Ladders might  
yet provide a good excuse to  
encourage my swaggers.

The choice alas is far too great  
and though it seems too late  
yet, dice in hand, I bid farewell  
with hopes still unerased  
and one finger upraised.

## **TIMELINE**

There's another timeline  
somewhere, where people are  
mourning me; where family and  
friends are living their natural spans,  
achieving all that was hoped  
for, but lost along the way in  
my parallel universe.

## **DON'T REINVENT IT - PERFECT IT!**

Better to repeat the excellence  
of something from the past,  
than create a new product that  
simply will not last.

## RAGE

Forgive me  
the rage of youth,  
the senseless  
towering frenzy  
of childish  
interception.  
the malignity  
of immaturity  
Now that I am  
old enough.  
Old enough to be dying  
with dignity.

## UNTITLED

Oh god, oh god, oh how it stings,  
the memory of those tiny things.  
The calm meanders in the park,  
the fireflies briefly brightening the dark.

## DENIAL

When that which once  
did touch my heart  
and left it  
torn in shreds,  
then sought  
to reappear  
and readdress  
the trespass  
it had wrought,  
I first believed  
the end had come  
and nothing good  
remained,  
but common-sense  
prevailed  
and though  
still pained  
I took the path  
of least  
resistance,  
half-shrugged  
one shoulder;  
half-filled  
the bucket  
of my vanished  
dreams;  
half-shrugged  
the other  
shoulder  
and said  
fuck it!

# OBITER DICTUM

Each morning I awake.

Each morning I am aware  
that I am the me that  
went to bed last night.

The same me.

And I experience  
a vast feeling  
of disappointment.

I pray for the day  
that I awake  
and am  
someone  
else.



## **SANITY**

I have always been mad.  
It is a condition  
I have learned  
to live with.

Yesterday however  
I had a moment  
of pure sanity.

It scared me.

## **DIVERSITY**

The diversity of peoples in the world  
is like the diversity of instruments in an orchestra;  
they provide different sounds  
but they produce the same music,  
and by collaborating they  
enhance it.

# FELLOW PASSENGER

We met at Waterloo.

As it seemed we were bound  
for the same destination  
we travelled together.

But halfway there  
I asked myself  
“Who is he?”

And I feared  
to ask him.

## OUR DEEDS DEFINE US

I have spoken many cruel words  
I have harboured many unkind thoughts  
I have been guilty of many unconcerned feelings  
and these are all shameful.

But, at the end of the day,  
I am not defined by what I say;  
I am not defined by what I think;  
I am not defined by what I feel.

I am defined by what I do  
and I have done nothing  
for which I need to feel ashamed.  
Thankfully, my deeds define me.

## **SHE WORE HER HEART ON HER 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 belovèd birds.  
Silent dove and muted lark.

She wore her heart upon her sleeve,  
and unheard were her dying words:  
“I believe”.

# UNTIL I DRAW MY FINAL BREATH

I try to draw an angel  
drawing on the wall  
with wings outstretched

drawing patterns on my chest.

painting the sun  
in a trance  
and drawing down the moon

I try to draw your face  
from memory.

Until I draw my final breath  
death  
shibboleth of shirt  
worn outside the pants

# THE POWER OF POSITIVE THOUGHT

I believe in the power of positive thought.

I believe I can affect the future and that  
the natural course of events is not immutable.

I reject the normalcy bias which assures me that  
because it has never happened, it *can* never  
happen. Sometimes life's greatest lessons come  
from the most unanticipated experiences.

And yet,  
and yet . . .

My favourite Scripture Ecclesiastes assures me  
that what has happened before will happen again;  
what has been done before will be done again; and  
that there is nothing new in the whole world.  
Resonance of the "history repeats itself" dictum  
whose lessons Santayana warns us to ignore at our  
peril.

Whereas my favourite history teacher "Tinny" Newman  
had a more appropriate prescription:

"History does not repeat itself, historians do."

How do I reconcile these apparently conflicting beliefs?

*[Silent screams]*

It is a precious lesson to be learned.

And perhaps my belief that the power of my thought is sufficient to alter the course of my life is merely another example of the Ecclesiastes' "vanity of vanities, all is vanity".

*[If there's a telekinetist in the house, will you please raise my hand]*

At one time I could not recall experiencing anything that I had failed to envision and this had always enabled me to make due provision for any nasty aftermath such as the problems involved in leaving a slippery bath.

Thus it was with an absence of concern that, having suffered a really bad fall, I immersed myself in a bath and then found I could not escape at all; and this stimulated me to reflect on other instances where prescience, or the lack of it, had failed to intersect.

How do I recover these memories?

*[Knee jerk!]*

It is a potential hazard.

Saddest of all is not what is or what might occur so much as what might have been.

What we do not realise, or are reluctant to  
accept, is that we inhabit the world we deserve.  
Returning, equally reluctantly, to my thesis, and  
returning to Scripture, we are told that  
one generation gives way to another  
but earth abides, and I cannot decide  
if this is a cause of regret or one of delight.

And when I am told  
in wisdom there is grief  
and that increasing knowledge  
will also increase sorrow,  
I'm tempted to set it all aside until tomorrow.

Okay. Oy veh!  
I'll leave it for another day.



# CONTEMPLATION

I arouse myself from joyful  
slumber and contemplate the  
assault on all my senses  
that I know will aggravate me  
as I anticipate

the odour of freshly chopped onion  
that assails my nose, in  
contradistinction  
to the aroma of freshly mown grass  
that elevates my soul.

When politicians speak their  
lies my nostrils twitch, in  
complete contrast  
to a metaphysical debate  
that enchants my essence.

I consider the “gherkin” in  
London that degrades my sight, so  
divergent from  
the view of the Parthenon in  
Greece that arouses my spirit.

And as I make the best of it,  
I grit my teeth  
and hold my nose  
and settle back to contemplate  
my inner peace and calm.

## SEEK NOT MY SOUL

I have left something of my soul  
in each place I have lived. And I  
have lived  
in many places.

What I ask myself now is:  
how much of my soul  
remains.  
And where does it reside?

## TAKE MY HAND

I am the difference that  
shelters the difference;  
I am the hope to  
nourish the heart;  
I am the truth that  
lights up the darkness,  
and causes all fear to depart.

,

## THE LAST TRUMP

We laughed when we built castles in the sand.  
We laughed through the tidal disarray.  
We sang with joy when the new-born babe arrived  
We sang with grief when she was borne away.

But who is laughing now that all is gone?  
Who is singing the last song of all?

Whose is the last laugh?  
Who plays the last trump?

## TRANSMUTATIONS

To shake forbidden fruit  
from off the sacred tree,  
to quell the hungry yearnings  
of the phantom bough  
and hide the mystic longings  
of the barren heart.  
These are the secret wishes  
that are keeping us apart.

## A FIERY STORY

Once upon a time  
we were proud.  
We had beliefs  
convictions  
targets  
and desires  
that encompassed  
more than our own  
simple wants.

Indeed  
we abhorred wants.  
We embraced  
needs.  
The needs of others  
as much as,  
if not more  
than our own.

Where have they gone?  
Who is there now  
to pick up the mantle?  
To run with the pennant?  
To proclaim  
a universal  
truth?

Who is there  
in this day and age  
to plant the seeds  
of selflessness?  
To demonstrate  
humility  
and love?

Where have they gone,  
the exemplars  
of yesteryear  
whose actions  
matched  
their words?

Who will be left  
to live  
happily  
ever  
after?

## WHISTLING IN THE WIND

I love the susurrations  
of sibilant sounds.

The word “bliss”  
is blissful.

The word “fuss”  
is fascinating.

The word “stress”  
is surprisingly soothing.

Tennyson has long enchanted  
me with his sibilant Lotus  
Eaters. His land of streams,  
some like a downward smoke,  
slow dropping veils . . .

His sweet music  
that softer falls  
than petals from blown roses . . .  
and music that brings sweet sleep  
down from the blissful skies.

I am enamoured  
not with the sounds of silence  
but with  
the sounds of sibilance.

# CATERWAULING

.  
I wake still and far too often  
with the all-too-slowly  
but oh so evanescently  
fading memory of her voice.

Ever since that odious event,  
that heinous malevolent and  
deafeningly persistent  
drumming in my head

that disturbs my sleep  
distracts my thoughts  
and haunts the daymares  
of my diminishing life.

The blaring, blasting bluster,  
the eruption of molten viscous sound  
that barks, yaps, yelps and yowls,  
that sounds, resounds and reverberates.

How can I escape the cacophany  
that threatens to enmesh me?  
How can I return to the  
tranquillity of a serene silence?

# THE MYSTIQUE OF POETRY

Poetry is like  
the stars one cannot see  
in the daytime.  
It is a sense of fright  
in the night.  
It is metrical  
but does not need to be  
symmetrical.  
It is rhythmic  
but does not need to  
rhyme.  
It is knowledge  
that precedes sentience  
but lags behind  
sensitivity.  
It is fuelled  
by consternation  
and damned by  
flocculation.  
It is ambiguity;  
it is obscurity;  
it is enigma.



## THERE WE WERE

There we were  
on the grass  
legs threshing  
and thrashing  
fondling on the grass  
stroking on the grass  
hands searching  
and seeking  
and finding . . .

Stop it you fool  
now you've scratched me!

Should have cut my nails,  
should have been gentler.

## DID SHE DIE FOR ME?

Our lives were always  
so interconnected,  
so entwined.

Despite her years  
of pain  
and suffering,  
her concern  
for my wellbeing  
was always  
evident.

Since her death  
my own health  
has  
miraculously  
improved.  
I am fitter now  
than I have been  
for years.

This morning  
I awoke  
to the most absurd  
thought:  
did she die  
that I might live?

# I AM THERE

Don't tell me . . .  
nothing  
lasts forever.  
I reject it.  
And so far,  
so good.

Don't ask me . . .  
to escape  
my situation  
by moving  
to another place.  
I am already there.

Don't deny me . . .  
my right  
to grieve  
For it is  
my weapon  
against anger.

Don't mock me . . .  
and tell me  
where  
you think  
I ought to go.  
I am already there.

## RAKING THE ASHES

Cast aside your Sigmund Freud,  
it's something you cannot avoid;  
to reach a time of dampening desires  
and lessening of lifelong fires.

## I AM NO PENITENT

I am no penitent.

I enjoy my impish  
behaviour  
too much.

I sometime feel  
that in a previous life  
I may have been Titivulus,  
the incredible Michael Ayrton's  
magnificent verbiage collector.

. . . the little devil.

# FAITH WITHOUT REASON

Faith is belief without reason;  
Reason is belief tempered by doubt.  
Faith is instinctual.  
Belief is cerebral.  
The vast majority of people  
Prefer faith to reason.  
Our choice of leaders  
Bears witness  
to this assertion.

## ON CONSIDERING CURRENT WORLD LEADERS

Oh, where has that god gone?  
Oh, what has that god done?  
How shall we live alone  
that once depended on  
a heavenly father who defended  
us and now is made superfluous?

Oh, where has that god gone?  
Oh, what has that god done?  
What can replace that  
heavenly grace? Can ear or  
hand or eye supplant its  
mirthless majesty?

Perhaps it's not that god has  
gone but rather god has been  
replaced by many other gods.  
Unholy gods, ungodly sods, who  
offer no exemption  
from time-past sin's redemption,

but just provide a shining light  
to illumine a fearful night,  
colonized by miscreants and  
similar recipients;  
and what remains in that confusion  
is nothing but a vast illusion.

There is no plan, there is no haven  
to escape from images engraven.  
The trumpet that was played by  
god is merely a connecting rod to  
nothing but a shooting star  
a sound drowned by Satan's guitar.

So often the god that we thought  
great is breeder of no more than hate.  
We see them in all walks of life with  
gordian knots that lack a knife, or  
weavers of a nautical shroud  
more shocking than a mushroom cloud.

I would choose to have it gone  
that secular phenomenon,  
that we might build trust up again  
far from the place where corpses  
reign, to somewhere safe for everyone.  
And now I vow my verse is done.

# I CAN DO BETTER

There was a time  
when words appeared  
mysteriously, magically  
magnificently  
upon the previously blank page.

And then came  
a period of total  
dissatisfaction.

I would read them once . . .  
and then again.  
And suddenly  
involuntarily  
they would cease  
to make sense.

I would say to myself  
“I can do better”.  
And then –  
“Better than what?”



# THE PATHS MOST TRAVELLED

The mistakes we make and  
then occasionally the paths we  
take, as we attempt to reach the  
topmost pinnacles  
of long sought for success,  
may be nothing more than the sad contrail  
that precedes our choice of a crooked  
trail. And we may frequently end up  
unable to achieve those sought for graces.

Sometimes we make the wrong  
choices to get to the right places.

## WHAT PRICE OPTIMISM?

Many years ago  
I had a dream.  
I believed in innate goodness  
and considered myself  
an optimist.

Alas for Nature's  
nasty habit  
of bringing one  
face to face with  
reality.

In sport  
the arts  
and politics . . .  
Indeed  
in every aspect  
and area of my  
existence  
idols crumbled;  
beliefs disintegrated;  
hopes evaporated.

And now that dream is gone.

## THE GUIDING VOICE

I heard a voice within my head;  
its tones sweetly mellifluous.  
It filled me with such melancholy  
as rendered speech superfluous.

Thus does my mind becalm my mood.  
The angry prejudice disperses  
all that lies misunderstood  
and lets my brain construct its verses.

## A TREASURE CHEST OF MEMORIES

I'll make myself a treasure  
chest and in it I shall place  
all those precious memories  
that time may not efface  
the sights and sounds and sentiments  
so savagely suppressed.

Those treasures will be bound in love  
and lovingly expressed.  
The memories are in my heart  
and there they will remain  
because to speak a word thereof  
will bring me too much pain.

## SHATTERED DREAMS

There they lie;  
spread around me  
a myriad shining fragments of  
the gift she had brought me.  
Shards of glass  
each a reflection of a broken promise;  
a gift procured but withheld.

And all that I can do  
is to survey those shattered remnants  
of unrequited dreams,  
and replay them on an endless  
reel of soundless, aimless,  
misbegotten promises that  
prick my heart  
as those metaphorical shards  
might have pricked my fingers.

What is left to me now  
but to weep?

## IT IS NOT A BLESSING

He kept his face turned  
when he passed me by,  
for he was one of Death's  
fierce creatures,  
reluctant to reveal  
his features.

What made him change his mind?  
Why did he choose  
to find another outlet  
for his malignancy?  
Too much to hope for  
some sign of benignancy?

How many times? How many times  
have I encountered that dreaded  
shade?  
How many times did I avoid  
his chilling touch, or am I  
simply being paranoid?

But what is far more  
of a chilling thought is  
how many are the other souls  
on whom he then alighted,  
who took the place  
to which I'd been invited?

## 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.

# TRADITION

We'd always done it  
that way.

We always used to salt the  
bread after we had buttered it.  
We always used to bless the  
wine before we poured it out.

We'd always done it  
that way.  
I guess I always will

It lingers in my memory

Dismiss it as I may  
I cling onto it still.  
we'd always done it that way,  
I guess I always will.

They always did it that way  
Perhaps they do it still.  
I used to do it that way,  
Perhaps I always will.



# THE ENGLISH COMPLAINT

That  
wise old owl  
Hippocrates  
declared that  
Man's health fluctuated with the  
weather.\* Illnesses flourished  
in the change from season to season.  
No surprise then  
that, given the greatest heatwave  
and drought  
in decades,  
the unexpectedly sudden  
change from midsummer  
to cold winter  
overnight  
should have produced  
an onset of every variety  
of complaint.

Being positive,  
at least the rivers are once  
more flowing.

As is my nose!

\*[On Airs, Waters, and Places by Hippocrates]

## THIS 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

## **SOMETHING TO CRY OVER**

It has long been known that  
large numbers of various  
organisms, including the  
pneumococcus, streptococcus,  
influenza bacillus,  
and many others,  
that may kill us,  
may be recovered  
from the conjunctival sac,  
especially if there is  
obstruction to the overflow of  
tears. Which only adds to my  
fears.

## ENIGMA

What are the truths that plague my mind?  
A torture chamber could not be so  
unkind as to submit me to such enigmatic  
theories of then and there.

A wondrous sense of mystery;  
a mystical sense of wonder.  
Bite back anger, beat the drum  
of thunderous joy to come.

I see myself still going  
and find myself still yearning,  
I lose myself unknowing  
and meet myself returning.

These simple wonders  
that do plague us  
what a nerve!  
Is it the vagus?

Or is it blocked synapses?  
Distorted perceptions or  
perpetual addictive patterns?

I must enjoy what is  
rather than suffer concern for what is not.

Tunnel vision has to be expanded.  
Cornucopia and not dearth has to be the aim.  
What is the catalyst?  
Perhaps I will find it  
in the diamond clarity of waking dreams  
amidst the chirping of cicadas.

**Part II**  
**FRENCH VERSE**

## TOUT CE QUE JE VEUX

Tout ce que je veux, c'est toi.

Tout dont j'ai besoin, c'est toi.

Tout ce que j'admire, c'est toi.

Rien ne me manque, sauf toi.

Et

si je quitte le monde

je le quitterai content,

car

je t'aurai connu,

et toi,

et toi,

et toi.

## LE MIROIR A DEUX VISAGES

Parfois je me regarde dans le miroir  
et c'est le visage de mon père qui  
rend mon regard.

Et je sais que dans ce moment  
il est toujours en vie parce  
qu'il habite en moi.

C'est ainsi que nous atteignons l'immortalité.

Un jour peut-être mon fils  
va se regarder dans un miroir et  
c'est moi qui rend son regard.



## MON ÉGLISE

Il n'y a pas un croix qui surmonte mon  
église ni une étoile à six branches.

On n'y trouve pas un croissant  
ni un swastika non plus.

Cette église n'existe que dans mon imagination  
mais elle est plus puissante que la pierre.

## SCANDALE

Entravé par les feuilles  
d'automne sur un chemin boueux  
Je me promenais  
avec difficulté,  
entouré par des vrais compagnons  
à deux et à quatre  
jambes. Et je me suis dit  
si on me permet  
encore quelques  
ans de bonne santé  
Je suis déterminé  
à vieillir de façon scandaleuse

# UN SILENCE PROFOND

Un silence profond.

Pour un instant  
tout mouvement cesse  
et mon esprit achève  
le sommet  
de la solitude.

Et puis  
tout à coup  
le bruit recommence  
comme un ruisseau  
brédouillant.  
Le vacarme assourdissant  
remue  
les enchevêtrements  
de mes pensées.

jusqu'à ce que. . .  
jusqu'à ce que. . .  
jusqu'à ce que  
la paix  
revienne.

Et c'est une  
situation  
qui se répètent  
sans cesse.  
Comme un robinet  
qui coule.

Les gouttes de la  
mémoire.  
Les gouttes des espoirs.  
Le bruit exaspérant,  
épouvantable  
qui monte,  
qui fait revenir  
des expériences  
qu'on a cru  
bien cachées.

Et après  
recommence  
la lutte.,  
la bataille  
entre  
les souvenirs joyeux  
et les chagrins.

Et au moment où  
je me sens crevé  
...  
un silence profond

## MOTS MÉLODIEUX

J'ai toujours été amoureux  
des mots mélodieux  
en français.

Quoique  
ça me frappe comme curieux  
que ces mêmes paroles  
soient odieux  
en anglais

## FRANGLAIS FUN

Par ma foi!  
said the gentleman so  
bourgeois; but it is so, I swear,  
quoth Moliere.  
Il y a plus de quarante ans  
and extant, I do declare,  
que je dis de la prose  
as everyone knows,  
having enormous fun,  
sans que j'en susse rien.

# RÊVE DES CONFLITS ÉTERNELS

J'ai entendu le bruit  
des balles explosant des armes à  
feu, et mon coeur  
a commencé à battre  
en même temps que  
mon esprit s'est élevé.  
Plus haut . . .  
encore plus haut.

Et j'habitais là  
au dessus des nuages,  
où je me sentais calme  
sans peur des  
attaques des terroristes.  
Et je chantais  
comme chantent  
des personnes libérées.

En me demandant toujours  
si c'était un rêve  
et si la liberté  
sera gagné  
malgré ces forces  
qui essaient d'arrêter  
notre progrès.

**Part III**  
**HAIKUS**  
**PARODIES**  
**APHORISMS**  
**SUNDRIES**

### **FREEDOM**

If you seek freedom  
Search within your mind and clear  
The shackles inside.

### **MEMORY**

Why'd my train of thought  
Halt before it got away?  
It ran off the rails.

### **LOYALTY**

My heart on your sleeve  
inspires me to believe  
it's in safe-keeping.

### **LOVE**

I still wear your heart  
on my sleeve. It reminds me  
of undying love.

### **LEARNING**

You may lose the plot  
but do not lose the lesson  
unless you choose to.

### **HAIKU ON CHOICE**

You have the option:  
follow the common path or  
create your own trail.

### **IDENTITY**

If you seek for me  
Lift the stone on which you sit  
You will find me there

### **TRANQUILITY**

Tranquility is  
nowhere to be found but in  
excess of labour

### **IRONY**

Those who the gods love  
and are taken far too young  
are the privileged

### **A HAIKU BASED ON A BASHO KOAN**

A branch without leaves  
A bird perches upon it  
This autumnal eve

### **CLIMATE CHANGE**

Ice floe disappears  
passively into the sea.  
The world is silent.



### **LABELS**

My life's a label  
Clinging to the packing case  
Of my many moves

### **A CAT**

Not to cause concern,  
She moves stealthily through life.  
But purr-posefully

### **SALVATION**

Seeking salvation,  
I advance remorselessly.  
But pitiaably.

### **CHOICE**

You have the option:  
follow the common path or  
create your own trail.

### **PROMISCUITY**

Promiscuity  
luscious ambiguity  
what acuity!

### **BOREDOM**

Awoke this morning.  
Nothing to complain about.  
Life is such a bore.

### **FREE WILL**

You may lose the plot  
but do not lose the lesson  
unless you choose to.

### **POETRY**

I have nought to say  
and yet I am saying it. . .  
That is poetry.

### **HAIKUS**

You must love haiku  
Simply because it knows when  
Enough is enough.

### **TRANQUILITY**

Tranquility is  
nowhere to be found but in  
excess of labour.

## MANTRAS

To ask the unanswerable question  
is simple  
To provide the irrefutable answer  
is profound.

I can learn more from those who oppose  
me than those who seek to please me.

The questing mind acts as a precipitate  
and yet I find myself inclined  
to place more faith in solvate. . .

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

Solitude is not loneliness.

Poetry is disciplined frenzy

**PARODY (T.S. Eliot)**  
**[Apologies to J. Alfred Prufrock ]**

I grow cold . . . I grow cold . . .  
The drips shall drop from my nostrils uncontrolled.  
Shall I put a sweater on? Should I risk a cardigan?  
I shall dress myself in white, emulate a ptarmigan.  
I have heard pelagic puffins on the shore.

I do not think that they were warning me.

**PARODY (Nancy Sinatra)**

These hips are made for bearing,  
And that's just what they'll do.  
One of these days these hips  
Are gonna bear a child or two.

**PARODY (Dorothy Parker)**

I like to have a brandy  
it makes my heart grow fonder  
and gets me feeling randy,  
just like a hot transponder.

### **PARODY (W.H. Auden)**

He marched them up  
He marched them down  
He marched them  
In and out of town.

### **PARODY (Shakespeare)**

Shall I applaud thee, shall I bow and scrape?  
Will you reward me, will you change the shape  
Of my demise?  
Shall I support you, shall I hold your hand,  
While others lose their nerve at your command,  
Or their disguise?

### **THE ZEN POET**

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.

### **THE INNER VOICE**

I heard a voice that spoke to me  
in tones so sweetly mellifluous  
they filled me with a strange delight  
and rendered speech superfluous.

### **POST HOC**

Do not judge  
my conclusions  
before you have tested  
my premisses.

### **UNTITLED**

What can she know of love  
who never love has known?

## **UNTITLED**

I always feel much better for  
the use of an apt metaphor.

## **VIVICULTURE**

Sow the seeds of kindness  
in the meadows of your life;  
and reap the harvest of love  
in the orchards of your heart.

## **METAPHOR**

Do not plant a rose bush  
in the shadow of an oak  
and expect to see a beauteous flower.  
Instead exult in the beauty  
that is the mighty tree.

## **DISCLAIMER**

Denial rose  
unbidden to my tongue but  
I could not disclose  
the words that lay  
unuttered  
in my heart

## **THE PADLOCK OF MY MIND**

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

## **A KOAN FOR A TURKISH COHEN**

Oy veh Izmir.

## **PUNISHMENT**

The worst punishment of all  
Is not that you do not get what you want,  
It is that you do get it.  
But too late for it to do you any good.

## **MISANTHROPY**

I wish I could rid myself  
of the depressing possibility that some  
people, somewhere, may be enjoying  
themselves.



The park was closed today.  
My weekly walk  
was meekly marred  
and weakly disarrayed,  
as was my disposition.  
My heart was closed today.

Put it there, she said, and then  
pursed her lips and, with a sharp  
intake of breath, vanished.

Though naught is above  
conjugal love;  
there's no closer connection  
than familial affection.

There it was again, that drumming  
on my door. And once more when  
I answered, no one was there.  
It's been that way  
my whole life through.  
I always open doors,  
but where are you?

What can she know of love  
who never love has known?  
What can she know of life  
who never seed has sown?

### **MOLIÈRE ENFIN**

“Well, I declare”  
said Moliere,  
or would have said  
were he not dead,  
and interested more  
in poetry  
than archaic  
prosaic  
podiatry.  
“That anti-hero  
of my play  
Jourdain is his  
sobriquet.”

## **APHORISMS IN FRENCH**

### **Tranquillité**

Rien n'est plus facile  
que d'être tranquille d'esprit

### **Brexit**

La constitution britannique est déchirée  
Moi aussi!

### **Perfection**

Parfois il faut accepter le pire  
Afin d'arriver au meilleur.







