

Beyond Me

Phillip Pulfrey

To Caro ,
for everything



Beyond me

Tenderness,

Love

Like hope

In Spring's first sunshine

Lighting both dust and bud

Both fragile with time

And full

As a heart

Remembering.

Life,

Love

For the sharing

Like scent

Upon the softest breeze

Enfolding

That hope upon joy

Like birdsong

Forgiving.

Now

Love,

For the giving

Like flowers

Painting the world

Unthinking

Just loving.

CAT *Cat*

You are
Miraculous moment of joy
Meowing to meet me;
Insistent life
Concentration of presence
Real as the wind
Bringer of newness.
You chase the shadows
Of this virtual life
 encaging me.

You are
Electric energy
Inventor of games
Condenser of pleasure
Luxuriator of sensation
Languorous as a cat
You generator,
You footwarmer you
Heartwarming proximity.

You

Regal Demander,

Granter of audience

Disdainer of men

You flick outside,

Stalk your secret way

Uncompromising.

ELEPHANTS

Elephants

I see delight in the faces of children
And occasionally of old men, close to death.
Between we carve masks from predictability,
Fix a grammar of suitable expression;
Petrify possibility in sophistication
Despising the changing years.
Expectation replaces observation
And elephants no longer delight.

SEASCAPE

Words rising and falling,
So many buoys on an amorphous sea:
A gentle undulation marking no passage.
Drifting on a tide of thought,
The wind sketching patterns
That have no apparent significance
But the delineation of form and time
The breath of light upon existence
Sensations that escape the words;
Flitting glimpse of fish
Murmured, half-forgotten shadows
Beneath the conscious will.
While memories scuttle sideways
In rock pools abandoned
To remorseless evaporation.

Azure the colour
Salt the taste
Childhood the vintage.
Another world
Without haste.

Days are longer
A gentle wander
Into Now.

Footprints in the sand.

Poignant seagulls
Make giddy this beach combing
A random salvage of things thrown adrift
from the storm-tossed days
That separate us.
Patting sand castles did not leave time
To think of me
As I stand across this sea
And recall the mystery of you.
Difference and sameness bind us
To the landscape of experience:
The child became this man
How much was random?
How much do we plan?
We survive as best we can
As time passes.
Sand pockmarked with air holes,

Tiny signals of life at the edge of water
The respiration of memory
Moontied to mystery
Of this eternal coming and going
Awash with time.

Fishing with metaphor
Flies cast over the deep
To draw you in
To where you have never been
To what you have never seen,
Someone else's dream.

Ssshhhhshh
Wshhhhhsh

In – Out

The shingle murmurs
The music of the spheres
The binding movement
Of continuation and return;
The celestial dealer of patterns.
Shells and shingle like stars

Contain each its secret
Of the universe,
Familiar and unique in their necessity.
Each the same and distinct
The patterns of identity
Bind and separate
Experience and essence.
The role of man,
To bridge the span
To construe time to Angels
Who do not understand.

The horizon touches the sun
And hushes the waters.
Along the edge
A moment's transparency
Shimmering intensity
Beneath the surface
Focusing the attention.
I reach and grasp
A humble stone, charged
With significance to stop time
And part the sky:

All reality is Now
And mind a bobbing bark among the buoys.

A ball of laughter encompasses all
Reverberates around the earth
Philosophy reduced to mirth
As striving ceases
Peace descends
All is as God intends.

Now

Elegant and poised in his delicate equilibrium of spirit
The Mandarin sips tea and contemplates beauty
Singing in the empty spaces of the bowl.

Outside does not intrude
Through years of disciplined meditation
Nor his screaming wife, raped repeatedly
By men with coarse laughter and indifference
Come to destroy what they cannot consume.

THE FAST LANE

But—

Certainty destroys;

Closed and petty-minded vision,

Full of fiery conviction, takes charge.

Impatient of hesitation,

Their headlights sweep the fast lane,

The rippling muscles of their engines

Harry bumpers in their way.

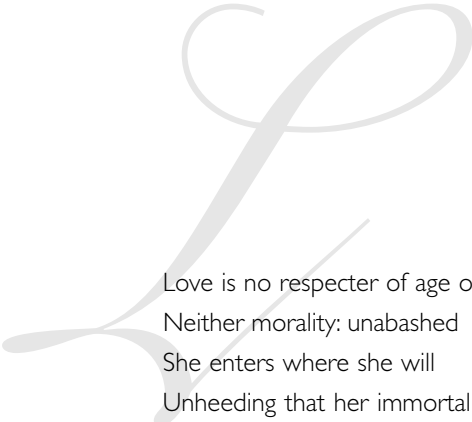
Through the tinted windows

One can glimpse them

In air-conditioned, leather depths,

Erasing nuance in decisions

Snapped into cell phones.



Love is no respecter of age or practicality
Neither morality: unabashed
She enters where she will
Unheeding that her immortal fires
Burn up human hearts
Destroy the delicate constructs
of our dwellings
Proud she is, and arrogant –
Or perhaps unable to comprehend
The impossible fragility of human kind.

I remember

A love affair gone wrong
A different taste
Bitter and strong
Tinted green:
Storms on this same sea
The elements set free,
Love snatched the tiller from me;
Earth and sky a dark confusion
Waves great roller– coasters
Of intense emotion.
A heady infatuation
That makes no calculation
For another.
Young love wants to smother
To encompass the other–
Not set them free,
Binding instead with jealousy.
Unseasoned wood
And misplaced expectation

Strained the bark
And split it open.
Tossing me adrift
To swim for shore.

Perplexed by the dichotomy
Between metaphor and reality
On the water's edge
I let the ebb and flow
Bury my feet in sand.

metaphor

A CLAUDE

The idealised rendering of a golden age
Wearing the tell-tale patina of time,
A comfortable mellowness for later years.
Two figures still linger there, hand in hand,
Whispering words I can no longer hear—
Vague promises of eternity.

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YOUTH

Two girls in bud stand and dream;
Of pop videos and magazines
Hair-tossed contempt
Throws its challenge
At the ranged army of boys
Too much lipstick around a cigarette
Pouts years not yet possessed;
The thrill of the first power of sex.

AGE

Taught and unyielding the kernel of self,
Silted by innumerable tides lies
Complacent to be no longer wave-torn;
Pleased at the distant thud muffled above.
While others, agonised by wind and salt
Ride the waves.

CAGED TIGER
freedom

I miss the taste of blood;
Especially at night when I remember
The moon on the Savannah
And the pure movement of freedom
Stretching beyond measure of bars

INFLUENZA

A grave attack of the malady of love
Had, I thought, rendered sufficient immunity
To all but a mild attack of infatuation
Yet I note all the symptoms of virulent contagion—

FOREST FIRE

A careless flame of recognition
Kindled on a spark from your eyes
Quickly caught on the dry grass of my life
And consumes me in a delicious conflagration.

SHE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND ME

Everything staked on the dice of a dream,
Heroic, romantic, or foolish, gesture?
Leaving the wife for a touch of youth
Or at last facing the Truth –

AN AFFAIR

She is tossed on the storm of her emotion.
He finds no connection of language
To the consequence of his action.
How could he?
He really does not understand—
A man's penis doesn't consult his mind.
She fingers the broken shards
Of the fragile bowl of trust
And calculates their sharpness.

HOLDING HANDS

You slipped your hand into mine...

To touch becomes harder with time.

Nicety separates:

An inappropriate medium for feeling;

Thought.

Blocking the reach of this instinctive hand.



CARO

Childhood magic;
A bright, red balloon against the sky.
Or waking up on your birthday
Or at Christmas when SANTA'S BEEN!
Or lying in the grass in summer
Without time and strawberries for tea—
Newness you give back to me.
Until I want to burst with love of you.



DRACULA

I should like to suck the essence of you,
To distil the essential fluid
Unmask this last secret;
What it is to be someone else.

CLOTH

We weave our excuses around events.

Thin, poor quality cloth of justification

Poor substitutes for the heavy tribal blankets

Once we wove to wrap our children.

NEWSPAPERS

Millions of wasted words

The decimation of forests

Ending in the doldrums of street corners

Flicked by the winds of change

Nature's deconstructions

**“ ALL IS DISSIPATED INTO MOMENTARY
REACTIONS TO THE PRESENT ”**

This praise rubbing shoulders with abuse
That our very nature does accuse
When the external and the internal will not meet
And all we can imagine is a petty conceit
That possibility of being does diffuse
Unaware of all we stand to lose.

VAN GOGH

ART APPRECIATION

“What’s it worth?”

It’s what they always ask,

Or an incredulous

“Is it really worth that?”

This square of cloth

Worried with pigment,

A brother’s love

and the price of paint.

An artless thing

This lumpy chair in sunlight

That cost you everything

Above their indifference

Financed with value-added suicide.

ADAM

Light, playing hide and seek with shadows,
Creates the dappled playground of insects,
Dancing to the choirs of water
Which smooth away the rocks of time
To the delight of a god who could not resist
The temptation of the artist for a larger public:
“Look, Bear Witness; for it is Good”.
But man, the ungrateful loved one,
Chose emulation,
Carrying memories in a briefcase,
Seduced by shiny baubles of
One-dimensional electronic reproduction.

I would like to have known the young earth
Still Virgin
Before the men came, indifferent
To beauty, with coarse desires
And abuse. Voracious appetites
Tearing the living from her
Abusing her fecundity and freedom
Breaking her to will.
I would like to see the young mother
Without the scars of multiple rape
Or the sadness of what she has seen.

CART HORSE

Cart Horse

Free me from the folly of man,
Remove the restrictive blinkers!
Untie this useless load I drag
Lead me to the field without fences.
Like the foal I once was
Let me gallop unhindered,
Or stand absorbed in my senses
At wonder of the world,
Still.

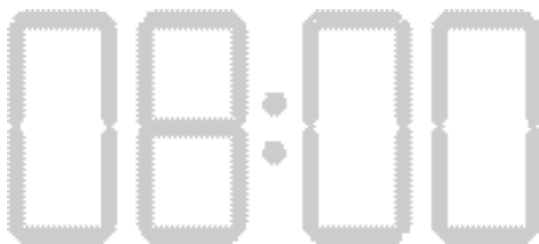
The springing of one flower
In a wintering unprepared for joy
Makes time self-conscious.
Self-possessed beauty
Defying all probability:
Our redemption.

CONJECTURE

On the farthest edge of the universe
A star died before I was even born to look.
The informing light travels still
But my lifetime will not span its journey.
While in the mountains I watch this ant
Preoccupied with matters of moment.

07:59

I am tired of the imposed rhythms of men,
Tethered time, restrained and trained
To a monotonous beat
Digital time blinking exactness
Unliving.



Time is like the wind
That comes in the morning
With a barely palpable caress of the cheek
Rising to a comfortable caress
In its measured passage of the day
Until it rises a sudden gale
Revealing the irrevocability of its power
Trembling our browning leaves
And blowing them to our finality.

Die tomorrow
And you will see
The wind still whistles over the water
The unironed shirts remain indifferent to your demise
While the others-
A few tears water their own regrets.
You will note that struggles melt
Like sunlight on snow
Which you had no time to watch.

Without the folly of fame
how will I know if ever I was good?
Yet, God, save me from this deceit
Making continuous narrative
Where there was only trying
and failure.

Lucifer

According to the Yezidis, there were seven angels of creation while God himself created man. Lucifer, angel of light, refused to bow down before man but was forgiven by God and is worshipped by the Yezidis as the key to our salvation ...

LUCIFER

Out of time was I born,
A flicker within the Absolute.
A sigh,
Almost human desire
For recognition.
Merest speculation.
On this oxygen
A tiny spark
Burst into conflagration:
My wings –
It is not given to you to imagine such beauty
New, on the day of my creation
And I worshiped Him for my existence,
Flew high to praise and with my light
Give the shadow of Form.

You stare in disbelief –
Oh yes!
It was I who gave form to this glory of creation
For the delight of God.
And it was beautiful without you

Adam man.
When my desire was only my God's delight
And we lingered like lovers
In each other's gaze.
Out of this cocoon of love
Six more
Wormed like butterflies to existence,
Each new pair of wings
Adding new play of colour and refraction.
Like children blowing bubbles
For the simple pleasure of ever-changing hue,
We carelessly splashed about Creation
Encouraged by the delighted laughter of our Lord.

Oh, it was beautiful before you
Adam man; God's jewel,
His inspired touch
The crown of our Creation
And how we cooed over you; our child.
Impatient for our turn
to lead you;
Hand in hand,
Through this garden;

We never tired to see anew
Through your eyes of innocence.
Your education was really ours
As if your gaze gave Reality
To the play of our imaginings.

Oh, Adam man, in innocence
I held your hand.
Is it really as it was planned?
Existence and essence
Are a heady mix;
Volatile liquids
Separated in truth.
The 'raison d'être' of the earth,
The case of so much celestial mirth.
Forgive me,
I could not have envisaged this,
The most ironical twist;
The split atom split,
An infinity of infinitives.
What is sex to an angel?
We who are made of air
Can only guess

At Eve
And tremble at the unknown.

Hand in hand you stood,
Her like milk flowing,
Silky, downed in gold
You, dark chocolate smoothness
Yet untasted.
Pure dialectic
Incomprehensible
To angel minds:
Not symmetry of wings
Nor a mirroring
But strange complement
An impossible unity of same
And opposite –
Like lock and key
To Pandora's box
That I had opened:
God's consequence
To my volition.
I acted
Possessing no parameters

Outside the absolute
So not judged, forgiven,
Self-imposed this attrition;
One drop of water I carry
 Burning
 Heavy memory
Of that one tear
 Caught
From God's face
 Fallen
Future already traced
As he sat, seeing,
 All –

Beginning requires End
A tracing of time
In fine sand dispersed:
All this rehearsed
In the mind of God
Implacable, unsparing
Even of himself.
I overawed
Hid my face from his mirror

Beneath wings trembling -
Useless gossamer :
Self cannot hide from self!
No departure
From *Hel*
This awareness
Of what one has done.
Oh, but pity!
God is mercy!
No reverse granted
But my head is lifted
My gaze he shifted
And I saw
The elegance of His design
In this Eve
He had conceived
A possible completion.

In your frail nature all is caught,
All the impossible answers that we sought
The fine thread of longing that we wrought
To tie animal to angel.
Form is the mirror of the absolute,

Or refraction rather;
The airy bubble blown
Sculpting time
One of many meanings
A burr momentarily snags
On the brushed attention
An acute present
Redolent with significance
Snatching memory out of desire
A half-remembered totality
Haunting dreams.

To see,
To weave this tapestry
Dancing past to future
To this music of time
This is itself divine:
Giving laughter to the universe
Beauty is the meaning of the earth
"La Nourriture Terrestre".

But, poor Adam,
You are not light.

Your sight partial,
Your nature must create
Structure and continuity
Else or dissolves into insanity:
The key to your evolution,
Metaphor and analogy
Which you too often confuse
For Reality.

Ah, Adam –
All your tricks
Your attempts to fix
The Universe
I have found much amusement
In your convolutions:
Attaching to me
All heresy.
With this blind pride
Which continues to divide
This spirit.
This weakness woven into flesh
That keeps you enmeshed
Vision impaired
In blinkered self

Ensnared.
You forget and dare
To nurture humourless conviction
And with this addiction
Stitching time to time
With twisted histories
And false certainties
Of science and religion.

Oh humanity...

Yet this,

 O God

This,

I could not...

The burning flesh!

The dispossessed

The slow, tortured death

 Pity!

Do you have no memory?

All this, all this

Oh malediction!

Madman, O Eve

How could you conceive

All this
In the name of conviction.
Children
Dashed to death
Ripped apart with derision
Death catalogued
Neatly
In the name of progress
For a better world!

Come
Draw not back
from my burning touch;
You must earn salvation.
On this highest station
I will show you,

All:

You create like cancer
And defecate progress,
A plague upon the world!
My Midas,
With your touch
Trees cut, rivers sullied

Oceans emptied
Life extinguished
Your Garden decimated
In a parody of creation:
You walk from Eden,
Never learning always
This yearning
 for power.
Pride and arrogance!

I could stop the world –

One glimpse of infinity
And you unravel
Self-forgetting back to God.
What I had conceived in naiveté
Is but shallow puppetry
If you are not free;
Like me
You remain mere possibility.
This divide is pride,
No more
All your innocence spent

You are rent in two
What can I do
But accept
The wisdom of God?

Thrust screaming thus
Into separateness
Existence: Life,
The miracle
The first cry
"I am":
And all the world
In one mind focused
To explain the universe.
So temporary
You cannot comprehend
The great divide of self and other:
Your destiny, Man, is to discover
Humility
To set you free
From this pride of explanation.
Patience!
In sweet Eve

God sowed the seed
Of Love:
Beyond the desire
For possession
Beyond the madness
Of obsession;
The volcano that erupts
And subsides
Lies sacrifice.
What you create
Does not satiate.
You will rest apart
Until your heart
Lets go.

What defines also separates
If I am you I cannot be me
Yet
Within the mysterious nature of your soul
You, partial, contain the whole.
Beyond the impulse to intention,
Impulse of the Will.
Beyond the dark collapse of despair

Or a tired capitulation,
Lies stillness of acceptance:
An inhalation paused
Before exhalation.

Time suspended
The centre centred.
The moment of true transcendence.
Where all creation waits
expectant
Man becomes a charge
Potential energy
Between nothing and infinity
And, on the bated breath of angels
Lies the gateway open
Pure Love,
of God,
For Creation.



*Pure Love,
of God,
For Creation.*

BEYOND ME
Phillip Pulfrey 1999

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