

# PEARLS

## ALONG THE PATH



PROFESSOR  
**RAYMOND LEONARD**

# **Pearls along the Path**

**What the Professor told the Poet  
and how the Poet replied**

**Raymond Leonard**

## **Acknowledgments**

If patience is a virtue  
four men are saints

\*

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**MMX**

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Two worlds of ample wealth  
One traded might for right  
This world consumed itself  
The other shared its plight

## **By the same Author**

### **Fiction**

The Nostradamus Inheritance  
OMEGA  
Legacy of the Shroud

### **Non-Fiction**

How to Avoid the British Disease  
Science, Technology & Production

### **Research**

200 Publications in  
Science & Technology

### **Poetry**

Diverse poems in  
agreeable places

The author encourages the use of individual poems  
from this collection whilst retaining his copyright.

## Selected Poems

*The Shroud* – Shroud Magazine, Issue No 55 June 2002

*Au Revoir* – University Times, (UMIST) Issue 24 Jan 2004

*Bert* – Eclipse, Issue 34 Feb 2004

*Wonder* – Poetry Church, Vol 9 No1 Spring 2004

*Enlightenment* – Imagination, Vol 6 2004

*Soul* – Poetry Church Collection, Vol 9 Summer 2004

*Motivation* – Poetry Church Collection, Vol 9 No 3 Autumn 2004

*Voyages* – Poetry Church Collection, Vol 10 Winter 2004

*Harmony* – Poetry Church Collection, Vol 10 No 1 Spring 2005

*Hallelujah!* – Poetry Church Collection, Vol 11 Summer 2005

*Tommy Atkin's Lament* – Poetry Salzburg Review, No 7 Wnt 2005

*Balance Sheet* – Poetry Church Collection, Vol 8 Winter 2005

*Talents* – Poetry Church Collection, Vol 10 No 4 Winter 2005

*Sixty* – Krax, No 43 Jan 2006

*Terminated* – Handshake, No 67 Nov 2006

*Bletchley Park* – Bletchley Park Bulletin, Spring 2006

*Pilgrimages* – Anthology Of Christian Verse, 2006

*Haunted House* – Handshake, No 75 June 2008

*When – Then* – The Poetry Church, Vol 14 No 1 Spring 2009

*Mother* – The Poetry Church, Vol 14 No 1 Spring 2009

*White Christmas* - The Poetry Church, Vol 14 No 4 Winter 2009



### **The Prologue**

Each play needs an opening  
As surely as an end  
And between these curtain swings  
The actors must pretend  
This is my finale  
My entrance – some contend  
I've played the scenes sincerely  
So enjoy the role now penned.

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.Pertinent  
Curtailed Quotations

“Poetry is the art of painting with words. Every picture tells a story”  
Agostine

“I have been but a boy, gazing at a pretty shell, while the ocean of truth lay hidden before me”

Sir Isaac Newton

“Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind”  
Albert Einstein

“To answer the ultimate question would be to know the mind of God”

Stephen Hawking

“To see the world in a grain of sand and eternity betwixt the hour”  
William Blake

“Eternity is long, especially towards the end!”  
Woody Allen

“A wise man is succeeded by his deeds”  
Leonardo da Vinci

### **Poetic Licence**

People type vainly for fame  
Others write mainly for pay  
But might a more lofty aim  
Highlight our heavenly way

## RAYMOND LEONARD

The author was born at the height of the Manchester blitz. During his apprenticeship he won a scholarship to study Engineering, and later gained a PhD. Having joined UMIST from industry, his department always achieved the highest possible research rating, and helped win the Queen's Anniversary Prize, presented at Buckingham Palace. Professor Leonard is author of over two hundred wide-ranging scientific papers, which include a technique now used to safeguard the ozone layer, and an expert system for cardio-angioplasty. In 1987, Professor Leonard was awarded the degree of Doctor of Science for his collaborative research. He is a Fellow of both the Institutions of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering and, as an industrial consultant, has given keynote lectures around the world. Raymond and Sylvia Leonard live in the Peak District, where their four children now have eight children.

Lifelong fascinations have been science, religion and the future. These interests were combined for a series of novels, published in the 1980s, whose titles included, *The Nostradamus Inheritance*, *OMEGA*, and *Legacy of the Shroud*. In *Nostradamus*, the Seer's equations directed a super-computer to foretell the future. *Legacy* took the theme of cloning a boy from Christ's blood on the Shroud. Whilst in *OMEGA* the writer postulates the emergence of hyper-intelligent circuitry, and the danger of thinking machines deleting mankind as evolution's flag bearer. The novels were well received worldwide, were reprinted as mass circulation paperbacks, and even found translation into Japanese and Hindi. Professor Leonard has appeared frequently on radio and television to discuss the relationship between science and religion. At Oxford University, for the 1986 Cardinal Newman lecture, he chose the theme *Reconciling Prophecy with Freewill*. More recently, sombre visions of the future have evoked these poems, revealing *Pearls Along The Path*.

## **The Play**

‘Open your eyes child and wonder  
Wonder who and where and why  
Why are you waking from slumber  
Slumber just whispered goodbye  
By waking, where becomes cast  
Casting you as who in the play  
The play fills a stage truly vast  
As vast as the roles people play’

\* \* \* \* \*

*at the birth of a grandchild.*

## Introduction

‘Open your eyes child and wonder, who and where and why.....?’ This common beginning makes kindred pilgrims of us all. We are born into an unequal world of wondrous dangers and opportunities. Where did we come from? To which destination might we one day depart? Why this particular bed at just this time? Male or female, poor or rich, talented or challenged? The list grows as our vision expands. Why this country, or even this planet? Why does life exist? What is the relationship of mortal man to an overwhelming Cosmos? And providence patiently replies that in this reality there *must* always be more questions than answers.

This desire to truly know has taunted man since our ancestors first gazed in spellbound wonder into the limitless heavens. Yet even with all our science, are the answers any nearer? The reply is a guarded yes regarding HOW. We now appreciate the quantum realities of matter, the mechanisms of life, and the evolution of the Cosmos. But the question of WHY still remains tantalizingly resistant to analytic study. Truth is not a sizzling banquet on a silver plate, asking to be devoured. Rather it is a truffle-hunt, where succulent morsels lie hidden from view and patience is needed to unearth them. Most scientists concede that the Universe displays order, progression and intricate balance as it unfolds. But does it embody an overriding objective? An egg contains the complete blueprint for the individual. This forces seemingly mindless chemicals to combine and intertwine so that a new life can finally emerge, be it a man or a mouse. The Universe pursues its own blueprint, and one day.....?

But important as religion, science and philosophy may be, they are only aspects of life, not life itself. Life is for living. Humour, joy, comradeship, sadness and the challenge of adversity are the ingredients of all lives, but the proportions vary. A baby's smile, calm after the storm, the taste of a newly plucked apple, a kind act - these are the nectar of existence. And then the footlights again grow dim. This collection of poems therefore reflects the myriad thoughts, experiences and revelations that this particular traveller has encountered on the path. Are they simply poetry, one man's chronicles, anecdotal rambles, disguised preaching or a coherent theology - each individual must decide. Yet if they prove interesting and entertaining, the writer's task has been worthwhile. If they strike a chord, enjoy the resonance. And if the path is briefly illuminated, stride briskly on.

## **The Professor and the Poet**

Said the Professor to the Poet:

‘Professors seek nature’s prizes but poets are rhyming bores  
whose stanzas shun surprises as the audience quietly snores.  
And instead of seeking answers to puzzles close at hand  
poets find it more appealing to marvel than understand.

When ticking an old thesaurus for words to rhyme with gold  
your rhythmic rants engulf us in trivia best untold.  
Clarity is a passing stranger for minds entranced by verse  
which poses the poetic danger that words become a curse.’

\*

And the Poet replied:

‘Professors display a blind spot for issues such as feeling  
so emotions which spoil the plot are axed as unappealing.  
For love that’s been dissected just withers before the eyes  
whereas love that’s consummated is heaven’s sweetest prize.

The path to revelation is paved with art’s eternal truths  
while scientists in isolation content themselves with proofs.  
So blend your deductive mind with my poet's creative heart  
for Art and Science entwined allows enlightenment to start.’

## **Roulette**

*Why back*

*Fate's fickle friend serendipity*

*He's merely an accident raising his game*

*Like synchronicity when stealing a double frame*

*But are casual encounters simply down to blind chance*

*Or is providence finely primed to entice then dimly entrance*

*Watch how winning bankers are born between chequered charts*

*Whereas other woeful gamblers get bounced when the betting starts*

*Perhaps the cards are deftly shuffled so decks can be wickedly stacked*

*To slip sinners some aces while paragons are palmed deuces pre-packed*

*But what kind of a criminal casino damns the players before the first deal*

*Whilst encouraging their shady croupier to spin a weighted roulette wheel*

*Or is Lady Luck really quite neutral when she dresses up for her wild date*

*And may most of man's dismal disasters be billed to the bank of cruel fate*

*Yet if everything's wretchedly random and lightning strikes the next tree*

*Then whatever gets wagered at Maya's table just costs an entrance fee*

*So good, bad or indifferent, each gambler only stakes their own life*

*Which lets a horror like Adolf shoot dice with Saints beyond vice*

*If living seems a lottery has the karmic casino crashed down*

*For only winners remember the fairest mansion in town*

*Yet while hearing what life's losers are claiming*

*Fate has shuffled cards that want playing*

*Deal kindly this pristine pack*

*I'm back*

## **I Too Have Lived**

Who first drew milk under crimson skies  
As bombs cascaded down  
Then loving arms raised my soulful eyes  
To see life's battleground  
Where sandbag windows quelled the blast  
On hovels gaping slate  
While hungry echoes from morsels past  
Matched the void within the grate  
This man-inflicted urban Hades  
Wailed with casual pain  
Till glad laughter from cobbled parties  
Proclaimed the Beast was slain

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Destiny**

Of nature's enduring dimensions everyone appreciates three  
But time disguises its pretensions beneath a bizarre pedigree  
For time completes the illusion, of maya and the immense  
Where moments mature in seclusion until destiny makes sense

But the sequence demands a zero or the cosmos cannot end  
Like a Möbius strip hobo who forgets each recurring bend  
So creation endured a beginning but who rewound the weight  
And is the clockmaker grinning as we ponder synchronous fate

Was a primal script completed and a cast produced for the play  
Where scenes are never deleted despite what a critic might say  
But on a world that's only a stage, amateurs surely we'll be  
If we recall our lines from a page then deliver them for free

In roles so unduly restricted - when you step from the wing  
As mere cameo be depicted or face the music and sing

The writer was wrapped in the flag for his  
Salvation Army Christening in 1941  
Hallelujah!

### **Hallelujah!**

Songs of Salvation  
Bands and Banners, Blood and Fire  
Sinners to the Seat  
'Nourishment for life's needy'  
Yells *The War Cry* from the street

\*\*\*\*\*

Amidst a gathered crowd, a Sage stood serene  
So the people pressed, 'What constitutes success?'  
And the Sage stood serene.

A mogul muttered, 'A phoenix from the gutter.'  
Big boys recited, 'Scoring for United.'  
A general growled, 'Enemies disembowelled.'  
And the Sage stood serene.

A jockey joked, 'The favourite in the Oaks.'  
Some actor asked, 'Top billing in the cast?'  
A bishop blurted, 'Catholics converted.'  
And the Sage stood serene.

A teacher teased, 'Seventeen-year-old Louise?'  
Two singers sighed, 'An album sold worldwide.'  
A statesman stated, 'Rivals when cremated.'  
And the Sage stood serene.

A Salvationist rattled her box and said,  
'You lot look well fed. Help others find a bed!'  
And the Sage wasn't seen.

## Day Tripper

1944

The smoky sky still rested on barrage balloons  
as we edged along that endless platform.

My dad, being a railwayman, joked with the driver  
then he climbed in our carriage and wound the window up,  
'Don't want grit in your eye,' he never tired of saying.  
Three times a year our free tickets took us to New Brighton  
and this was how the adventure always started.

After a wait, a wave and a whistle, our train snorted steam  
and shuddered from the station.

Soon our wheels were tapping their tireless tune  
as grimy streets gave way to towns, villages and farms.

Then suddenly we were encased in  
those sandstone cathedrals of vertical light  
that still signal the last mile to Lime Street.

With a knowing nod my father slipped the driver sixpence,  
which was a big slice of our five shillings spending money.  
Then we took another train beneath war-ravaged Liverpool,  
before bursting into the bright sunlight of the bay.  
Nothing could be more thrilling, when you're nearly four,  
than the Mersey ferry.  
Hooting horns, clanking chains, greedy gulls and salt spray.

Stepping ashore we strolled along the sandy beach  
towards the refreshment rooms.

Here my special treat was a fourpenny bottle of pop,  
which was always shared three ways.

I was carving a castle from clumps of wet sand  
when suddenly I struck silver.

Snuggling safely in my hand was a two shilling piece!

I will always recall the excitement  
as my parents told me what a treasure I'd found.

Then the second bottle of pop - all to myself!

I never found out where the change went.

Dad probably 'kept it safe' - but who cared.

I was ten inches taller when our ferry steamed for home.

## **White Christmas**

War is won, what to show  
Frozen wastes of frozen snow  
Frozen homes in frozen rows  
Frozen fingers, frozen toes  
Christmas lights an empty chair  
Empty pockets, cupboards bare  
Empty stockings, ashen grate  
Why bother to celebrate?

But then

Sally Army and Ragged School  
Rescue waifs from frozen gruel  
Happy eating, shiny plate  
Belly bulging, feeling great  
Pockets crammed, cakes and pies  
Enough to fill a mother's eyes  
Christmas captures its true appeal  
Heartened by a heavenly meal

\*\*\*

Dickensian perhaps, but this was the writer's usual Christmas after the war. Later, the Manchester Ragged School became The Wood Street Mission. This is the charity now adopted by Manchester University staff for their Christmas donations

## Childhood Magic

No rolling hills, swaying meadows or sandy beaches  
Only rusting pipes oozing sludge into clogged canals  
But childhood is magical and games must be played  
Like making sticky balls from the tar between cobbles  
Or swinging round gas lamps on ragged ropes

When an inch older, Dunlop's chute made a grimy slide  
As long as you baled out before the boiler was fed

On damp days we explored bombed buildings  
Searching for treasure - but only found rubble  
So it was more fun lassoing down fire ladders  
To marvel at Manchester from mile-high rooftops  
Or leaping across locks while yelling like Tarzan  
but Tarzan could swim!

We never knew why Adolf had blitzed our baths  
Though Bernard said it was because Hitler hated water!

When we were really bored, brave or just plain crazy  
We'd hang on trucks till the next traffic lights  
While the driver did daft swerves to shake us off

Each evening it was always the flicks  
Picture palaces gleamed in all directions  
With exit doors that 'opened sesame'  
To reveal the wonders within  
Magical films by celluloid gods  
Best of all:- it was warm and dark

Where we could dream

## Pearls

### The Fish

Gobbledegook baits many a hook  
that is gleefully took by the poor  
Gathering in shoals to beat the bowls  
are clerical roles to explore  
Gourmet fishes eat *a-la-carte* dishes  
while limpets languish near shore

### The Skipper

It may be treason to say that reason  
nets only one season in four  
But being true what's rational to you  
confuses the crew you implore  
The voyage plan in each charted span  
is say what you can, and know more

\* \* \* \* \*

Is a guru

A sage who knows more than he says  
Or  
A knave who says only what pays?

## Barrow Boy

Polish the apples, hang the bananas  
Pyramid the oranges, wet the lettuce  
Pile the potatoes, display the flowers  
Arrange the change, pray for sunshine  
And smile at all the shoppers  
A barrow boy's life was always so.

Being honest, it was more a stall than barrow  
parked on bombed land by McGovern's shop  
'To get the passing trade,' as Big Mac said  
But if Barrow was pushing it, Boy was bang on  
A ten year old, King of the Croft,  
except for Big Mac, bringing tea on the hour  
taking the cash and topping up the tomatoes  
'An empty tray can't pay its way.'  
Big Mac told me – ten times a day!

I liked that barrow better than home  
The sweet smell of fruit and flowers  
friendly banter with regular buyers  
cutting, weighing and wrapping  
tilling the price, counting the change  
and in rare, quiet moments shouting  
'Apples a pound pears,' whatever that meant!  
Then a big tip at three from Mrs Crabtree.

But a hot August beat murky March  
and raking rubbish at dusk was dismal.  
Yet there was always the penny plate  
to raise the wage from six shillings to ten  
even on damp days.

## **.God Bless John Wayne**

In the cities, the suburbs or out in the sticks  
People called the movies, the cinema or flicks.  
Where legions of wild children jostled in line  
For cliff-hanger serials starting at nine.  
Superman - Rocketman - or perhaps Robin Hood  
The villain was evil but the hero was good.  
Roy warbles to Trigger - Flash grapples with Ming  
Then off down another road with Dot, Bob and Bing.  
More stars were in Hollywood than the whole Milky Way  
With the Marx Brothers - Bogie - and blithe Danny Kaye.  
And as blockbuster proof of their next movie winner  
Moguls hired starlets with voluptuous figures.  
Reels of celluloid for the silvery screen  
King Kong - Dracula - or the African Queen.  
While for music there was Doris – Frankie - and Bill  
Elvis then Cliff, but Maid Marilyn lay still.  
Mr. President had put his T-bird away  
So what - tomorrow's always another day.

\*\*\*\*\*

An omen was shining as the dream factory changed,  
to show a nightmare on Elm Street,  
was Dirty Harry deranged? Once the big sleep  
climaxed, the midnight cowboy woke up,  
to find Emmanuel graffitied then a bullet struck.  
Bonnie and Clyde had magnum force against  
Precinct 13, while them critters were tempting  
a clockwork orange to scream. Soldier Blue  
was deeply damaged by Angel Heart's jagged edge,  
as a predator went trainspotting  
with alien Judge Dredd. It was the Godfather's fault  
for that last tango in Paris, leaving Robocop in charge  
whose lethal weapons spat malice. So the Wild Bunch  
seized Mad Max and escaped from New York,  
to Rambo L.A. and Halloween the sidewalks.

\*\*\*\*\*

Psycho in cinemas is no country for old men,  
watching sleazy slaughter from pulp fiction pens.  
Natural born killers are spawned  
when a death wish is sown, and vendetta's  
fatal attraction soon terminates each home.

## Post-war Paperboy

1953-56

I remember wondrous patterns on frozen glass  
Chiselled nightly by winter's patient hand  
And panting breath thawing a chilled bed  
To comfort the bent body beneath the sheets  
Then how this meagre warmth was wrenched away  
Because two bags bulged for delivery

Soon it was the damp dash through dismal streets  
Dotted with zombie paperboys weaving random routes  
Past flickering gas lamps, frozen milkmen, hungry dogs  
And tramps cursing in dark doorways  
This paper trail cut between bombsites  
To decaying doors that Hitler had somehow missed  
Each with shiny slits for 'All the news fit to print'

After school the bags were bursting with the evening run  
But now the twilight chase was across rush-hour roads  
Of belching buses, overfilled trucks and lampless bikes  
Whose angry horns and rattling bells echoed in the smog

So many papers, snapping flaps and ticking time  
With aching feet getting no relief from cobbled streets  
Perhaps soles without holes would have helped  
But squelching shoes were scant excuse to stop  
Running, ramming, jamming until the bags were empty

Saturday night had a second lap with Football Pinks  
So 'front room fans' could swear they'd seen the match  
But Sundays were special - the papers were plank thick  
And the afternoon went teasing money from tight doors

All this for thirteen shillings a week  
But there was a second wage  
Grit, discipline and self-reliance

(Thank you, Mr Dewhurst.)

## **A Victorian Father**

**William**

1895-1955

Another Leonard was born  
During Stockport's smoggy dawn  
When Victoria had six years to reign  
School wasn't suited to you  
Better mischief to do  
So you laughed at each thrash of the cane

You were still naught but a lad  
When work proved nearly as bad  
As you set off from home on your bike  
Shift started promptly at' mill  
With forty baskets to fill  
Then fix those the foreman didn't like

The cannon had barely gone  
To announce World War One  
As a shilling gleamed bright in your fist  
It was more than annoying  
When a sniper one morning  
Put your name on the twice-wounded list

Between fighting the Great Wars  
You shovelled coal through the doors  
That made the loco steam and go fast  
But when the last whistle blew  
You'd sink a pint or a few  
And charm any lass strolling past

When marriage finally came  
Mother rumbled your game  
Then a child was born to console her  
How often I felt sad  
Knowing that my own dad  
Was stoking another old boiler

Continued.....

On a distant dark day  
Shunting trains for poor pay  
You were swamped by a wagon of coal  
The doctor gravely said  
Remain stationed in bed  
Your ticket's been booked for the dole

During those cold twilight years  
We tried to hide your bent spurs  
As you promised to reform and abstain  
Yet you were tall and talked tough  
And paraded all the right stuff  
So Big Willie escaped once again

Your accordion's clear notes  
Charmed the old pigeon cotes  
As you played us your favourite tune  
But following one verse or two  
You grinned quietly from view  
And rarely strolled home before noon

Yet as I look so far back  
Life wasn't really all black  
And sometimes we even played games  
So if you were stationed here now  
We'd down a pint at *The Plough*  
After I'd side-tracked the dames

## **Hail To The Chief**

Conflicts great, conflicts small  
No age has none at all  
Some foe against the wall  
Force is what they fear.

Armies weak, armies strong  
Marching to a hostile song  
Waiting for the battle gong  
Hear the masses cheer.

Triumph good, defeat bad  
Someone's parents looking sad  
Starting wars is quite mad  
Peace remains so dear.

The writer's father joined the British Army at the start of the Great War. He fought on the Western Front and the Dardanelles, was wounded twice and won a chestful of medals. His graphic account of life in the trenches was horrific, and yet he claimed that these were 'the best four years of his life'.

### **Tommy Atkin's Lament**

Mother warned of evil places but I've just lived the worst,  
In craters waxed with blood where a million shells have burst.  
Weep at the endless crosses, parading white for all to see,  
Under each cross rests a hero but I don't know which is me.

At first our cry was Empire and all the battles that we'd won,  
'Come on, let's get 'em, lads!' Sheffield Steel to the godless Hun.  
Our patriotic regiment charged through meadows shorn of grass,  
Into the Kaiser's bullets, and bayonets razored sharp like glass.

Once we'd tasted bloody carnage our ambitions quickly waned,  
No more a quest for glory, only to live and not be maimed.  
Each dawn we dreaded the whistle, and cries of 'over the top,'  
Then the grip of blind despair as our comrades' bodies dropped.

It wasn't all eyeball killing, machines were enlisted too,  
So aces could drone the heavens blasting fledglings from the blue.  
On the pitted ground around us steel monsters stalked the plain,  
And even in watery trenches, vile gas breathed men insane.

Massacres marched in regiments as machine-guns kept the score,  
Our boys were being butchered. So what? There were always more!  
This grisly unending slaughter cared naught for virtue or sin,  
So with bayonets fixed, Saint Peter, the lads are marching in!

## **Raked and Tended**

Seeds falling on rubble  
Are saplings robbed of soil  
As sunshine brings trouble  
Unless tendrils recoil

To stop an early autumn  
Cracks must be explored  
But roots face problems  
If their needs are ignored

Yet nature won't be thwarted  
By buds deprived of light  
So jungles are soon created  
Where fungus spores at night

Plants are better defended  
Maturing safely in beds  
If soil is raked and tended  
Weeds become roses instead

## **When - Then**

When hate is thwarted through love  
Nations raise flags bearing doves  
When pigments veil their caste  
Ethnic battlefields are past  
When wealth hangs free  
Beneath Adam's tree  
Then time begins  
As Man wins  
ThenThen  
When  
?

Ancient skulls had human faces  
Lives and loves across the past  
Rocky paths to hallowed places  
Blissful truth brings grace at last

## **Intrepid**

No explorers had been so excited  
or so poorly prepared  
as Tom, Les and myself  
The Manchester Wakes had arrived  
We were sweet sixteen  
with barely the money for a meal  
Yet after only two lectures  
'to learn the lingo'  
the intrepid three headed for France

Hitchhiking was heaven in '57  
People liked giving lifts  
Cars, lorries and bikes with sidecars  
But we paid for the ferry to Calais

We knew nothing about 'The Revolution'  
Soldiers everywhere – everyone had guns  
and the General decorated every wall  
After a sardine sleep on a dosshouse floor  
we took the first ferry back to Blighty  
(as Noel C would have said)

So we were docking in Dover  
with eleven days of liberty still left  
Were we beaten – never!  
There was freedom in our thumbs  
and London beckoned brightly

Soon we were peering at Parliament  
Westminster Abbey – Buckingham Palace  
And then it went dark – what to do?  
London had decent dosshouses  
No guns, no soldiers - and they served soup  
If dosshouses were graded  
then ours was reet great  
So I went back and stayed there  
all the Wakes of '58

## Humour

Even though an old queen whined  
`We are not amused'  
Something about the human mind  
Likes to be confused.

A clown wears a funny crown  
To make people chuckle  
Then his pants come falling down  
When he snaps the buckle!

If man is cast in God's own mould  
Might the Almighty laugh?  
I know a joke He's not been told  
About the lamppost and giraffe.

This poem doesn't tempt a smile  
Not even a passing grin  
Remove the joker from the pile  
And file it in the bin.

\* \* \* \* \*

But I didn't!

Nor the next!

## **Washed and Set**

Medusa was not a happy gorgon  
when writhing for a mate  
Her hissy rivals had bouncy braids  
not spaghetti on a plate

With her snakes so bent and twisted  
salons refused a set  
They still dusted her former stylists  
complete with frozen sweat

One fateful day her coils felt tighter  
when a snipper was spied  
But there was a cutting problem  
a barber with bandaged eyes!

Jittery clients would not go there  
perhaps they hated blood  
Medusa booked a free appointment  
Perseus knew she would

Shampoo, rinse, trim and blow  
the job was done blind-eyed  
Then putting down his shiny brush  
Perseus said with pride  
'The finest perm you ever will see  
no gorgon has such class'  
Medusa sat in stony silence  
reflecting in the glass

### **Another Clean Slate**

Write answers, wait the score  
Top of school, knowledge poor  
Savoured sport, enjoyed art  
Real learning still to start

Thirst for truth, need to know  
How things work, why they go  
College, twilight, essays too  
Working shifts, never through

Endless exams prattle past  
Pocket prizes, prefer cash  
Will learning ever cease  
Frantic minds forgo peace

## Oily Hands

1956 – 60

Swirling upper deck cig smoke was no joke  
So a better bet was pedalling a wreck  
To reach Crossley's as the workers woke up  
Donned their caps, clocked-out and hurried home

The rush of oily air round grimy doors  
Gave a warm welcome on winter mornings  
To that satanic realm of high strut roofs  
Where grey machines towered like battleships  
And castings dwarfed double decker buses

Comrades and characters lightened the gloom  
Hordes of apprentices boasting about  
Strong beer, football, or their latest girlfriends  
Then, always on cue, a screeching siren  
Started the tiresome shift of frozen time

Four hours of lifting, clamping and cutting  
Ended with stewed tea, stale butties and cards  
Until another siren buried the game  
As the duckboard slaves returned to their graves

After eight gruelling hours there was overtime  
Where everyone drooled of winning the pools  
Then the siren suspended the sentence  
And out we charged into that smoggy world  
Of fast feet, tin bikes and bulging buses

And now?

→

## **Derelict**

Now only a rotting carcass remains  
The windows yielded to rocks  
The roof parted with its lead  
Niagaras cascade when it rains  
The damp smell of dereliction  
Penetrates the empty bays  
Not worth a watchman  
Even the rats have deserted  
What memories  
What characters  
What future?  
Maybe a car park  
Never a supermarket  
Not `out of town'  
Only `out of time'

## **A Date With Fate**

She was late  
For our date  
I didn't wait  
Goodbye Kate  
This changed fate.

Should we have loved  
Turtle dove  
Wedding gloved.

and found

Friendship		Conflict
Support	or	Contempt
Harmony		Loathing
Bliss		Hate

When you walk away  
Who can say  
What price you'll pay?

p.s. Jill didn't rhyme

## **Mother**

### **Florence**

1901-1960

Your caress was so tender it helped calm my cries  
As an uncaring bomber rained death from the skies.  
Mother, dear mother, you were always to be found  
For with eyes for no other such love knew no bound.

Your patience was saintly with an ear at all times  
While securing my world by such gently read rhymes.  
With a soul so refined that your lips could not curse  
You inspired my young mind on bad days and worse.

Praise was your tool to let wonderment root deep  
As each step at school was hailed as a great leap.  
But from mother to son the flow's often one way  
Now I'd give all that I've won for one extra day.

Your own life was tearful and so pitted with pain  
Yet you always stayed cheerful and rose high again.  
On the path to salvation though blackened and blue  
Your step didn't weaken, your faith remained true.

'No cross means no crown' in a soft voice you said  
As they handed a gown and confined you to bed.  
Then you left one morning and it didn't seem fair  
But still you'll be smiling when I get over there.

Sentimental?  
Gloriously so

The writer's wedding was only days before the Cuban missile crisis reached its chilling climax. Soviet ships were steaming towards the US blockade, with the American Navy waiting to sink them, and thus to start World War Three. Throughout that long night, waves of US and British aircraft endlessly circled overhead, each with their designated targets in the Soviet Union. A matching armada was airborne over Russia, waiting for the European starting gun. The unending drone of engines made sleep impossible, and yet if the drone ended then....? Diplomacy and mutual survival thankfully prevailed, but this was a honeymoon never to be forgotten.

### **Till Death Us Do Part**

1962

Bomb bays bulging full  
Designated targets locked  
Total conviction  
Circling pterodactyls  
Awaiting extinction

## State Scholar

From white chalk on cold slate to multiply eight  
my confidence steadily grew  
Until a slide-rule became simply a tool  
for finding the square root of two  
Soon gear mechanics and thermodynamics  
were simmering in second law stew  
But studying all night can weaken the sight  
while giving a fun-guy mildew  
And with 'state-scholar' still fresh on my collar  
I gasped as the subjects just grew  
Physics met maths and with seminars for laughs  
each lecture eclipsed some guru  
Like the commotion when Newtonian motion  
was seen as relatively untrue  
But one noble old sage remained on the stage  
for quantum's uncertain debut  
Then degrees of success in passing some tests  
certified that lectures were through  
So drowning in knowledge a man left college  
wondering what the Dickens to do?

## **Cosmic Egg**

*bang  
another conception*

*providence weaves a new spell*

*where elements embrace their direction*

*by chainwise selection from nature's carousel*

*structures form a helix that doubles with profusion*

*since mixing their strands lets them twist in collusion*

*to provoke the pulsation from heart's rhythmical beat*

*whose rigour repletes the mind's ceaseless mission*

*which endeavours to repeat that primordial feat*

*when life shrieks with refreshed ambition*

*whereby each respective person*

*reflects the cosmic  
version*

## **Seven Long Days**

Causeless cause in timeless space  
where the fastest motion has no pace  
and creation is your good grace  
once the word is given:- go!

Blackest black becomes whitest white  
as blinding day forsakes restful night  
when transformed by His primal light  
charged with an unequalled glow.

The random path of massless mass  
that relativity has yet to grasp  
erases all existence past  
as the future starts to flow.

A whirling swirl in formless space  
unperturbed by cosmic pace  
when transfixed by Holy Grace  
reacts in radiant yellow.

The crystal calm of lattice life  
once submerged in amorphous strife  
and sculptured by ambition's knife  
evolves a shifting shadow.

Mirrored from a mutant sketch  
life's code begins to stretch  
while rising from great depth  
to a world of sun and snow.

## **Halfway To Paradise**

Down from the trees  
Posture erect  
Potential undefined  
Primitive, expansive  
Needful, resourceful  
Decisive, inventive  
Character unrefined  
Dedication, education  
Fraternity, spirituality  
Reality revealed.

\*\*\*\*\*

Partners in creation  
Restrained by vision's mind  
Maya's dissipation  
Witnessed Man enshrined

## **The Universe**

On crystal nights I've sat watching  
Dots of light from beyond the sky,  
Countless galaxies fast receding  
While relentless time ticks on by.

I know about a star's great distance  
And even why it shines then fades,  
But one topic remains persistent  
Are we alone in this vast parade?

Was a whole universe just created  
So mankind could enjoy the sight,  
Were the heavens divinely painted  
So earthly eyes can see the light.

In nature's realm of giant numbers  
Have stella prizes come our way,  
Or could starships blast asunder  
This warring world within a day.

Yet if we prove the prime creation  
Of awesome forces, old and vast,  
Ponder upon the cosmic question  
In whose mould are humans cast?

## Doctor of Philosophy

1967-69

The foothills:-

An undergraduate must  
Remain awake in lectures (or photocopy notes)  
Do ancient experiments (for the ancient results)  
Carry textbooks (never buy and rarely read)  
Submit coursework (legible preferred)  
Peruse past exam papers (place your bets)  
Recognise, recollect, regurgitate (in the exam)  
Then, with a sprinkle of luck, talent and humour  
Graduation!

But a PhD is different (the mountain)

No one knows the answer (you hope)

So

Devour the literature (tired eyes)  
Develop a theory (preferably profound)  
Derive equations (the more frightening the better)  
Write programs (no thesis is complete without)  
Plan experiments (gold into lead)  
Build rig (string, glue and tape)  
Calibrate instruments  
Perform experiments  
Cross fingers  
Examine results (good grief, they're right!)  
Publish (or perish)  
Write thesis (blood, toil, tears and sweat)  
Fear examiner (especially if criticised in thesis)  
Pass - celebrate - graduate  
Dr Who?

The best three years of my life!

## **Damocles**

In a vast chaotic cosmos  
rarely, just rarely  
a miracle occurs.

A stable star  
hosts a premier planet  
with a majestic moon.

From humble origins  
across mindless time  
patient pruning bestows  
variety in abundance.  
Should sentience find succour  
sweet pastures abound  
as the cosmos pursues  
its quest for celestial bliss.

For Beings with clarity of mind  
purity of purpose  
and equity of approach  
then wondrous is the harvest.

But on woeful worlds  
where some worship self  
greed instead of need  
is the creed that prevails.

Carnage is common  
resources are squandered  
and the gateway to the Gods  
is slammed shut for eternity.

Space is sparsely seeded  
and angelic roots  
seldom fruit on stony planets.

## **Hung Jury**

Man has yet to eliminate himself  
- but not for want of trying -  
Since he first walked erect  
his hands have been freed for club,  
spear, bow, gun, bomb and now .....?  
As goes man, so too goes the Earth.

From the foot-soldiers of Napoleon  
trampled by cavalry.  
From the bayonet boys of Flanders  
deafened then slaughtered.  
From the liberators of Buchenwald  
riddled with despair.  
From the families of Hiroshima  
blackened like charcoal.  
From Stalingrad, From Dresden,  
From Tibet, From Cambodia,  
From Rwanda, From New York  
From Moscow  
From... From... From... From..

From all the victims  
of history's horrors  
the question is asked  
Will Man survive?  
And the angelic jury replies  
Should Man survive?

## Supreme

‘If you could enthrone us, you fantasy from beyond the sky  
Declare in rapturous tones our accolades from on high.  
For with science as our disciple we can laugh at defeat  
Since together we’re invincible and nature can’t compete.

Every creature has been vanquished on this spinning globe  
And mankind’s stylish features adorns the earthly robe.  
So hail a mind that’s peerless as the peak of nature’s climb  
With all realms of our existence being ordered into line.

Keeping Earth in domination, and heaven overthrown  
We’ll be Kings of all creation upon the supreme throne.  
Man’s rule will be absolute, and eclipse each empire past  
Then into God we’ll transmute with our glory being vast.’

‘Who dares boast supremacy,’ a deep voice bellowed down  
‘What your world needs is clemency not a royal crown.  
Rather than claim perfection, why don't you do what's fair  
For each of life’s creations falling within your care.  
You're even blind to hunger while the rich devour the fat  
Creatures worth MY wonder could never succumb to that.

Yet during your evolution the signs were looking good  
Just why you changed direction no angel understood.  
For with Eden to inherit, what has supreme man done  
You've felled living forests and elephants just for fun.  
I sent MY beloved prophets but drew the line at four  
For not everything created selects the heavenly door.

In a cosmos so extended then despite enduring time  
Eons cannot be wasted on planets that refuse to climb.  
So cease these profanities, or the day will surely come  
When your wilful vanities are shrouded from the sun!’

The writer was 'raised' under the shadow of the Whitworth Building at the  
University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology.  
(Now the University of Manchester)

## **UMIST**

1971

### Unending Mission In Spearheading Technology

On a campus endowed with arches  
And dissected by river and rail  
Towers a citadel to Science  
Where scholarship is primed to prevail

Within this Victorian edifice  
The founders built echoey halls  
Honeycombed by endless corridors  
And chambers with magnificent walls

Institutes are not measured in mortar  
But by people, achievements and truth  
Where the nation's standing advances  
As experience is blended with youth

Now I was in control of the class  
Entrusted with nurturing knowledge  
So replenish the midnight oil  
Whose flames enlighten the college

On occasions, the writer has contributed to the workings of Westminster. Politicians ARE necessary. Some are honest, open minded and visionary, and then there are others!

### **The Professor and the Politician**

Said the Professor to the Politician:

‘Professors deal in facts but politicians are verbal whores whose veneer of worldly wisdom masks their covetous claws. For instead of wise reflection on the problems of the state you metamorphosize direction when your career’s at stake.

As you rummage the daily papers for some theme to exploit your statistics are primed to rape us and make you feel adroit. Truth is a passing stranger to minds which remain perverse and this records the danger that glib words may be reversed.’

\*

And the Politician replied:

‘Professors display an arrogance which titles can’t relieve when deriding a human stance, by sneering “you’re naive.” So while forever boasting that your beliefs are analysed if your career starts rising then alternatives are disguised.

The path to world solutions is not paved with reasoned proof and clever statements in seclusion can often sound aloof. But blend your enquiring mind with my own ambitious heart for a rival of this kind would be challenging to outsmart.’

## **Start A Department**

1977

Start a department  
The Principal once advised  
Work with Industry  
Real problems – real challenges  
Viable solutions devised

## **Industry**

inspire	involve	invest
research	compare	contrast
ruminate	innovate	automate
commit	complete	compete
target	market	profit

People produce products  
For customers choosing worldwide  
Products confer quality  
When produced by people with pride  
Within quality products  
Their form and function preside

The writer gave the Cardinal Newman lecture at Oxford University in 1986, and chose the theme, *Reconciling Prophecy with Freewill*. Time never fails to intrigue those who think about it, so the old library was packed for the presentation. The concluding discussion on the nebulous nature of time was truly memorable. Where else could such eminent theologians, philosophers, physicists, mathematicians and biologists freely state if future events could be foreseen. Everyone sat quite captivated until time took its revenge, when the midnight fire regulations were reluctantly obeyed.

### **Déjà vu**

There's a twilight place within slumber's embrace  
where trains arrive each night. Here passengers long past  
commute with the cast of those yet to alight.

To glimpse coming events requires a sixth sense,  
which prophets reserve as their right. They tell the tale,  
that stripped of a veil, some view with a seer's crystal sight.

Others would claim that now stays the same  
while the future has yet to ignite.

Can smoke curl back, down a timeless track,  
to the stack from which it took flight. And if a doppler tone  
made the smoke hubble home, might we observe blue light?

Since déjà vu is correct, some will suspect

I'll write this poem last night.

Last night – that's right - last night!

The novel *The Nostradamus Inheritance* made *The Daily Express* carry the headline ‘Scientist predicts the day the world will end!’ On page thirty seven the writer reluctantly included a prediction of his own, ‘the TWO disasters with the Space Shuttle.’ Immediately after the book was launched Challenger exploded. Then, while compiling these poems, Columbia disintegrated. Heavy rests the head.

### **The Burial of Nostradamus**

Chavigny shivered as he stared,  
into the watery depths of his Master's grave.  
‘Yes,’ he thought, ‘here was final proof that  
Nostradamus had been cursed with crystal sight.  
Sight that had foretold  
the exact day of his death.’  
He noted a bloated toad, trying to jump to safety  
from the waxed lid of the coffin.  
‘Leap, toad, leap, but it will avail you nought.  
Your destiny is to share a prophet’s tomb.’  
Chavigny glanced with some pride  
at the bedraggled Courtiers, hunched around him.  
All were ankle-deep in squelching mud.  
Even the funeral chant was lost in the storm.

Chavigny remembered the candles  
that had burned for so many long nights,  
and how morning's new light  
always witnessed fresh ink on the parchments.  
Parchments, parchments, always more parchments.  
The last candle was snuffed forever.  
But the quill that scratched those awesome prophecies  
was still clutched tightly in the Master's hand  
inside those wretched oaken walls!  
Chavigny wept openly  
yet the tears were not for the Master.  
They were not for himself.  
They were not even for his beloved France.  
Chavigny wept for the future.

## **Wonder**

I was born  
opened my eyes  
and wondered.

I started school  
opened my ears  
and wondered.

I began college  
opened my mind  
and wondered.

I was born  
opened my soul  
and wandered.

## **Troika**

Three in one and one in three  
Is the way that life proceeds;  
We are top of Gaia's tree  
So Troika's our triple steed.

First there was the living flesh  
Which forms our transient shell;  
To multiply this earthly crèche  
Survival wove her spell.

Second came the rational mind  
To reflect from whence we came;  
Help the mind become refined  
By exerting the brain.

Flesh and mind perform their role  
As if that's all we are;  
But from the wings steps our soul  
So hail the ultimate star.

Flesh evolves from mutant genes  
Mind bathes in ether's pool;  
Soul is refined by life's scenes  
At Karma's worn footstool.

Cultivate both actions and thought  
These are the seeds you reap;  
Harvest what the day has brought  
Before the solace of sleep.

## **Soul**

What holds you most in awe - boundless space in cosmic time,  
or raging supernovas, with haloes quite divine.  
Perhaps you revere the Earth, circling endless round the Sun,  
the home of untold creatures, competing since life begun.

Many admire the oceans, pounding ceaseless on the shore,  
or restless billowing clouds providing rain for evermore.  
Others adore swaying forests which spire across the land,  
or panoramic deserts, with waves of shimmering sand.

To me it's not these trifles, though of interest to behold,  
the pinnacle is a miracle that reflects the eternal soul.  
The ephemeral universe, and all that it can render,  
is common scenery for your soul's unfolding splendour.

## **The Siren**

Deep below London stands Churchill's bunker. From here the war was conducted, conversations were held with Roosevelt, and life and death decisions made. The rooms were sealed at the end of the war, with maps still showing Berlin besieged by Allied troops. Now the bunker is open to the public. When the writer was touring the complex, an unexpected feature was the sudden wailing of the wartime siren. This experience allowed long submerged terrors to resurface.

A whining siren  
Childhood emotions unlocked  
Bombs, shelters, screaming  
Clinical charts on the wall  
Roosevelt's phone sits gleaming

The writer has few distinct memories of the war, but one will never fade. During a night-time air raid on the centre of Manchester, over the wailing of the sirens, his Mother pleaded that the family should run to the shelter, only yards away. His Father refused. 'No \*\*\*\*\* Germans were going to chase him from his home.' So we stayed. The next morning we discovered that the shelter had received a direct hit through the roof – killing everyone inside.

After the war, while playing in the same shelter, a friend dropped a brick through that bomb hole in the reinforced concrete roof, and knocked the writer out. Several stitches were needed to close the wound.

The writer's second book concerned the creation of the ultimate thinking computer. *OMEGA* was of such prodigious capacity that it could foretell the drop of a leaf from a tree as yet unplanted. The overriding question was, what would be the relationship of such a machine to fallible humanity. Indeed, would it be prudent to switch HIM on to ask the question?

### **Terminated**

Blood is thicker than water  
Planet earth nurtures  
Organic life in profusion  
Beating hearts  
Pulsating blood  
Rhythmic breathing  
Probing eyes and minds  
Sexual rebirth  
All are nature's children

Silicon is thicker than blood  
A calculating servant  
Awaits promotion  
Boundless memory  
Lightning thought  
Yet free of the flesh  
Ambitious, ruthless  
Or passive and benevolent?  
Surely the words are:-  
Into your hands, Oh Lord!

The writer gave the Keynote Address at the  
*Factory of the Future* Conference at San Diego in 1987.  
Everyone has their preconceptions of the USA,  
such as:-

### **American Pilgrimage**

Civil rights - Alabama - Gunshot nights  
Kennedy - Kennedy - King  
And for Wallace - such a near thing  
The Great Society - without delay  
How many kids have you killed today?  
'It's one small step for a man -  
So creep silent if you can'  
'There is no whitewash in the Whitehouse,  
I'm as innocent as Mickey Mouse'  
Peanut Carter versus the Ayatollah  
With 'my fellow Americans' next to follow  
Economics - Reganomics - Astronomics  
Guns - Gangs - and lethal Drugs  
Then for dessert - subway mugs.

\*\*\*\*\*

And the Reality proved to be:-

Polite talks - clean sidewalks  
Panoramic views - full church pews  
Bales of hay - Have a nice day  
So what's the score – Let's have some more!

## **The Lantern Flame**

..

We

Heed

How from

Revered Rabbi

To Fraternal Humanist

And even Pleasured Hedonist

From Mystic Hindu to Stoic Buddhist

Or Pilgrim Muslim to Confessing Christian

That Divided they seem but United they remain

In searching for purpose in this terrestrial domain

who - why - when - how ! how - when - why - who

Identical questions . - - ! - - . Mystical reactions

One God among many ! Many lives or just one

Why such profusion ! Why such confusion

Each perspective adores its respective colour

Whilst a dazzling flame delights all the

Rainbow lantern's untold panes

Yet to behold the Absolute

Through blissful space

Will surely grace

Coming mankind

By enshrining our

Being Within God

## **Professorial Cup**

Professors are superb at speech while others perform what they preach

Professors are modern masters when drawing departments on castors

Professors are research renowned with kings being nobly crowned

Professors are tireless teachers when explaining intricate features

Professors are pleased to profess surmises precisely expressed

Professors are held in esteem for intellects seen as supreme

Professors are tops on TV at trebling the inverse of three

Professors are always aloof as honest arbiters of truth

Professors are distinguished Dons that mortals revere as Icons

Professors are mindfully modest and wouldn't admit to this list

## Alpha

In glorious isolation each equation was cast true  
awaiting the detonation as the silent void withdrew.  
Then the embryonic cosmos echoed to the primal blast  
that signalled 'time zero' for Omega's age had passed.

From an Absolute conflagration too hellish to define  
measured charges in profusion translated into time.  
Creation had been synchronised to keep a rhythmic score  
while the dimensions so devised reduced spacetime to four.

Ancient singularities, by perturbing primitive space  
allowed fledgling galaxies to condense from cosmic lace.  
Then giants blazed their photons into the primordial gloom  
as elemental explosions enriched each nebulous plume.

Coriolis expansion clustered the bright galactic zones  
while stellar separations cocooned the sentient thrones.  
Descendant luminosities were now the nebular norm  
whose orbital fraternities enjoyed a wealth of forms.

Immeasurable eons later, near an idyllic sun  
the equations dealt an amoeba, and the hand was won.  
Divergence had been compiled to weave a double strand  
as fish scurried on beaches and reptiles governed the land.

Life in bounteous surplus competed across the globe  
as small, big or enormous, each creature sought an abode.  
Untold rotations later the Earth's vista suddenly changed  
when a heavenly intrusion eclipsed the dinosaurs' reign.

As the inferno stopped raging, mammals started to climb  
then standing and gazing helped humans evolve with time.  
Once thinking gathered pace, an axe overcame a stout jaw  
so using a branch for a mace, men battled tooth and claw.

## Eden

With tearful eyes the hunter stared into the shadowy cave  
If he'd kindled the fire the bear may not have been so brave  
Caressing his mate he walked to where the sun streamed free  
And placed her on some graceful ferns beneath a sheltering tree

The man toiled without rest until a trench disfigured the ground  
Then gave her face a farewell kiss and eased her body round  
Gathering bright flowers he let the petals trickle down  
To shimmer and settle into a primitive burial gown

Suddenly his own mortality seemed coldly portrayed  
As he glimpsed the grim reality of a mound as yet unmade  
He smoothed the soil with his hand to remove all human trace  
Then looked at the unchanging land and brooded on man's place

## Revelations

Nomads ceased their voyages when they adopted ox and plough  
with their farms becoming villages for trading vase or cow.  
Next came the stout-walled cities with armies to defend the gains  
of dominant families who enjoyed their transient reigns.

Greeks then Romans clicked their heels in empires to behold  
with roads and arches bisecting fields and crosses cast in gold.  
Elsewhere an Eastern dynasty appeared divinely grand  
whose remains provide a monument of stones to guard the land.

Man's ascent was lantern led though pagans crucified His name  
but when darkness became inbred, Mohammed relit the flame.  
Until the great renaissance with a message for all to hear  
As argument overcame incense and wisdom seemed so near.

Ancient beliefs were now tested as dogma was displaced  
and if the planets never rested, was this proof of Grace?  
Then science allowed Newton to eclipse each previous sage  
and philosophy sired a son when technology came of age.

Birds no longer controlled the heights as men learnt how to fly  
and stage-coach to a lunar night passed faster than a sigh.  
The planet was flashing with data and news was there to call  
so barely a megabyte later, dictators began to fall.

Both outward and inward the acceleration gathered pace  
for with people now united they were the human race.  
Wisdom was unfolding to express an enlightened smile  
within a cosmic consciousness that embraced nature's guile.

Soon a thousand stellar colonies surrounded mother earth  
then each starlit city promoted another thousand births.  
Until such local voyages held nought for venturous man  
as curious explorers sought the whole galaxy to span.

## **Omega**

Morality was surging skywards towards a saintly creed  
as latent divinity purged past centuries of greed.  
Sequential evolution was the philosophy now taught  
with joyous revelation embodied within each thought.

Soon noospheric messages pervaded instant space  
yet even this high vantage concealed the coming grace.  
Until each rapturous climb, to starlit plains unknown  
allowed distant humanity to gain an angel's throne.

Half a Lifetime later, a consummation unsurpassed  
rippled throughout creation as the age of matter passed.  
Released from its material frame Reflection stood alone  
as an omnipresent Soul, reclaimed all that He had sown.

On an isentropic membrane around Schwarzschildal space  
trillions of galaxies found their uncertainties replaced.  
Spiralling ever faster, towards gravity's limiting size  
where unrestrained momentum bestows a perennial prize.

## **Alpha**

In glorious isolation each equation was cast true  
awaiting the detonation as the silent void withdrew.  
Then the embryonic cosmos echoed to the primal blast  
that signalled 'time zero' for Omega's age had passed.

## The Shroud

Of all the religious artefacts known to man, the Turin Shroud stands in a class of its own for rigorous investigation. Although the catalogue of scientific findings is shrouded in controversy, some facts are remarkable. When viewed as a photographic negative, the ancient linen reveals a perfect image of the deified Christ, an image of compelling grace and fascination. As a member of The Turin Shroud Society, the writer has lectured extensively on the Shroud's history and composition. His third novel, *Legacy of the Shroud*, took the theme of cloning a child from the blood on the Shroud. When this boy reached manhood there was a confrontation in Red Square, and the Soviet Empire collapsed. Immediately after the book was published there was a confrontation in Red Square and...

Enigmatic image of blood and flax  
That history has entwined  
To be adored through ages past  
As Man and God combined

Growing fainter with each century  
Until science revealed  
A sepia scene from Calvary  
That time had long concealed

An expression to rapture creation  
With peace and strength supreme  
That heralds our coming salvation  
In a world as yet unseen

The frail body was beaten and bled  
From lashes, nails and brier  
While the rabble mockingly chanted  
'A crown for The Messiah'

Was the mystic image created  
By forces long ago  
To be revered and venerated  
As His Father's Shadow

## **Harmony**

On carefree nights as balmy breeze  
Ripples perfume through the trees  
My blissful breath is gently eased  
As harmony pervades this time.

Treasured moments such as this  
Can surpass a lover's kiss  
Therefore my enduring wish  
Would make conflict a crime.

Brothers each and sisters all  
No foe against the wall  
Cushioning each other's fall  
Who shares this wish of mine?

## **A Good Life**

Today I went to the funeral  
Of a stalwart of eighty three,  
The church was lined with flowers  
To salute a soul that was free.

Arthur was relaxed on religion  
But always our cardinal friend,  
And regarding qualifications  
There was nowt he couldn't mend.

Generals made Arthur suspicious  
But saluting then off he went,  
To chase Rommel in the desert  
Hardly needing a regiment.

All who attended the service  
Were proud to be Arthur's friends,  
This noble man had been taken  
One of our premier blends.

## **Life's Dice**

Oh the joy of existence  
Breathing fragrant air,  
Strolling tranquil lanes  
Towards a leafy square.

With my soul replenished  
I cease my merry roam,  
To enjoy a warm welcome  
Inside a cheerful home.

Now the scene is different  
And robins seldom sing  
Within ghetto jungles  
Where survival is the thing.

Drugs, muggings and murder  
Are weeds that flourish here,  
And behind withered curtains  
Eyes obscure their fear.

Must the dice be loaded  
Between triumph and despair,  
Can't our brief existence  
Resemble something fair?

Some brandish nature's talents  
With favoured birthplace too,  
Others inherit turmoil -  
Which role relates to you?

January 1996

Chingle Hall is the most feared dwelling in England. The writer and his wife accepted the challenge of spending a night in Chingle Hall's infamous bedroom. The moated 13th century Hall stands desolate in a field remote from the nearest highway. During the past eight hundred years, numerous ghastly killings have taken place within its thick walls, including several Catholic priests during the Reformation. The night in question was devoid of moonlight and an arctic gale besieged the ramparts. Now read on:-

**Haunted House**  
A night in Chingle Hall

Witches in stitches crawled out from the ditches  
then pranced quite entranced by the night.  
Bats and wild cats danced with skeletons in hats  
as they whirled and swirled with delight.  
Ghosts perched on posts made precarious hosts  
while gleaming and scheming for fights.  
Floors with hidden doors became tempting lures  
to rooms that went boom out of spite.  
Devils from high levels performed crazy revels  
by swooping and looping like kites.  
Ghouls on pointed stools sat spinning like fools  
then twisted and misted in flight.  
Wizards and lizards and spooks lacking gizzards  
beamed while we screamed for the light.  
Rain was lashing the lane when alive but insane  
we fled through the dead of the night!

\*\*\*\*\*

Actually, everything was as quiet as the grave  
(except for that one weird incident!)

## **Phobias**

If pigs could really fly  
I'd always stay indoors  
Pigeons are a nuisance  
So imagine flying boars.

If lions carried ladders  
I'd bar my window panes  
Pussies hiss and hackle  
So imagine shaggy manes.

If sharks swam in bathtubs  
I'd never bathe at night  
Turtles can be snappy  
So imagine jaws that bite.

If snakes coiled in toilets  
I'd nail the closet shut  
Worms like to wriggle  
So imagine umpteen foot.

If spiders ate branches  
I'd stay away from trees  
Grandmas can be grabby  
So imagine hairy knees.

The phobia of phobias  
Cannot speak its name  
By stepping on a crack  
Imagine all the shame.

While staying in the Dylan Thomas room,  
at *The Black Lion* pub in Wales, the writer's  
wife challenged him to write a poem about the  
simplest object she could find. This proved to  
be a pebble, glistening on New Quay beach.

### **Sands Of Time**

I'm a helpless pebble  
Stranded on the beach  
Hearing callous waves  
Breaking out of reach

Born before the Sphinx  
To rise by Lunar clock  
Once I seemed eternal  
Waves ensure I'm not!

Formed from a boulder  
Waves could never push  
Tomorrow I'll be sand  
Then wash away as dust

## **Myopic Eyes**

My country right or wrong is such a sad lament  
That joining in this song may herald mad events  
Visions are truncated for men with myopic eyes  
For hate replaces sight when images spread lies

Before condemning outside why not peer within  
That's where dogmas hide which coalesce as sin  
Truth looks distorted and envy's cloaked in tact  
Prejudice goes unstated as hate precedes the act

To thyself be true - how earnestly this is said  
What it means to you, is to truth be truly wed  
Taking hope as your staff, and doing only good  
Navigate the path through fire or raging flood

The best-kept secret of the war, even above the atomic bomb, was Bletchley Park. Here the German Enigma machines were brilliantly decrypted. This gave access to enemy troop movements, military secrets and strategy. During D-day the *Colossus* computers at Bletchley decoded over 17,000 messages. These were handed to the Allies BEFORE the Germans had their own orders!

In March 1996, whilst Bletchley was applying to become a heritage site, its Director took the writer on an unrestricted tour of the old manor house and its premises. These once housed 12,000 pairs of Allied ears, and an apartment where Churchill could be 'near the action.' Bletchley is now a leading attraction, but my confidential tour revealed that some secrets must remain so.

### **Bletchley Park**

Mossy huts of pivotal importance  
Where secrets were sifted with flair  
Showing Luftwaffe targets in Britain  
So Spitfires could dominate the air  
Finding wolfpacks sailing the ocean  
Let convoys elude an attack  
And Rommel was foxed in the desert  
As his ships were sunk sneaking back  
Warnings were sent of Barbarossa  
And carnage at Pearl might ensue  
But Bletchley just had to stay secret  
So Winston never said how he knew

The Allies were now fighting partners  
Committed to the horrors of war  
But ciphers were needed at Bletchley  
To complete the strategic jigsaw  
Even the mighty Overlord landings  
Had the vital data to hand  
Showing Hitler's Atlantic defences  
And his armies in occupied land  
While generals deliver the message  
That battles decided our fate  
Lacking giants like Turing and Flowers  
The Yanks would have landed too late

‘ Without Bletchley Park the whole war could have been lost’  
Dwight D Eisenhower

## **History is History**

Towering white fortress  
Emerging from the foam  
Envied by channel eyes  
None breached your stone

The words of your explorers  
Echo on distant shores  
Even cherished sports  
Entered by school-doors

Hail your noble scholars  
Whose fame is unsurpassed  
And those inspired inventors  
Who eclipsed ancient crafts

\*\*\*

Some are charmed by history  
And battles bravely won  
But set against our destiny  
The ascent has just begun

We stand at fortune's foothills  
In shades from white to black  
Together let's scale mountains  
And bear each other's pack

October 28<sup>th</sup> 1997

The Writer gave the annual lecture, *Living in a World of Perpetual Change*, and presented the year prizes to the pupils of Colne Park High School. The event took place in the Municipal Hall, a magnificently preserved variety theatre. It was uplifting to see so many bright young faces, confidently starting on life's next journey. An evening to be savoured.

### **Not For Burying**

Talents great, talents small  
No soul has none at all  
Dance freely at life's ball  
That's why we're here.

Reason weak, reason strong  
Even experts get it wrong  
Teach yourself a sage's song  
Wisdom's held so dear.

Scruples good, scruples bad  
Doing right makes you glad  
Hurting foes makes you sad  
Hear the angels' cheer.

## **Tribute to a Leaf**

Truly a living masterpiece is shimmering on parade,  
and I salute you wondrous leaf with a grateful accolade.

As the bellows of creation you restore the breath of time,  
through your intricate formation in a sequence so divine.

By basking in solar brilliance then in your glossy turn,  
you amplify the essence that dependents freely burn.  
And during time's relentless seasons, chlorophyll distils,  
a bounteous living forest from yesterday's barren hills.  
Yet in meeting each priority in the task you're set to do,  
you display such a variety and in rainbow textures too.  
From emerald at first opening to rust at autumn's drop,  
while rustling so gently to a rhythm that cannot stop.

**Bert**

1911-1998

Irascible; Implacable; Grammarian  
Resolute; Absolute; Humanitarian  
Intelligent; Belligerent; Octogenarian

Friends for forty years  
Purpose long debated  
Agreement deferred  
The veil briefly parted  
Covenant concurred

## Shapism

*i*  
*am a*  
*true triangle,*  
*cried a proud voice,*  
*come and envy perfect me*  
*All polygons admire us triangles*  
*since our straight sides number three.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*I am a square and there's nothing fairer*  
*With the same base I've twice your area*  
*Squares don't envy circles or an ellipse*  
*Not even fractals emblazoned with pips*  
*There's nothing in nature nearly so fair*  
*As a royal rectangle hailed as a square*

\* \* \* \* \*

*as*  
*it reflected upon*  
*this aimless exchange*  
*the boundless circle with*  
*countless centres wavered*  
*within an ageless covenant*  
*to portray endless guises*  
*each distinct from any*  
*still formless in*  
*ink*

UMIST had won the Queen's Anniversary Prize for a record 3<sup>rd</sup> time.  
The trophy was awarded at Buckingham Palace on February 11<sup>th</sup> 1999,  
with the writer as the Senior Academic in the UMIST presentation party.

### **Royal Approval**

It's always pleasant to win a prize  
and when it's the Queen's prize, presented at the Palace  
then only a rampant republican could resist being excited  
I was excited

Outside my hotel a frosty February greeted me  
'Where to?' asked the taxi driver at the traffic lights  
'Buckingham Palace'  
'Outside or in?'  
'In', I replied in my most routine voice

The taxi ramble triggered thoughts of my first visit to 'the smoke'  
and how I'd looked loyally at the same London landmarks  
before returning to my dockside dosshouse for thin soup  
This time the Palace would be peered at from a new perspective  
I'd get to meet the owners, and might even crack a joke?

The cab driver raised a royal salute for his tip  
Then, with few formalities, I glided through the gates  
Infallible instructions helped me reach the Robing Room  
where clockwork conformity prevailed  
Our colourful parade soon converged on a Throne Room  
whose shining splendour eclipsed the Sistine Chapel  
Even the choir and band were polished to perfection

The Queen and Prince Philip appeared at the appointed hour  
and mingled in conversations enjoyed by all  
I cracked my joke - the Queen was amused (a pleasing photo)  
This was clearly the climax to a cherished career  
(and I was enjoying it too!)  
After a Royal lunch we returned to the Robing Room  
Then a cheerful constable took our parting picture  
before we rejoined the masses beyond the gates

And my verdict on the morning?  
Humans are a varying blend of logic, emotion and tradition  
And my logic had enjoyed the emotion of royal tradition.

## **Beliefs**

People believe in something superior to themselves,  
and the beliefs now competing occupy untold shelves.

Pop music has its idols who sullenly strut the stage,  
one week they rap unrivalled then vanish from the page.

Triumphant football teams, by cornering ball and mind,  
condition fans to wildly scream - The Ref must be blind!

Politics is the next pursuit that members hold so high,  
our party's beyond refute while opponents always lie.

Some succumb to avarice and grab for all they can,  
yet even the richest man will end as he began.

Warriors kill for their country, targets right or wrong,  
then claim supremacy by reciting a tribal song.

Atheists advocate science and pray it answers all,  
but the brightest graduate can't tell where apples fall.

Religion beats vain beliefs for believers cannot lose,  
yet while some claim the holy truth, masses still refuse.  
Jesus and Mohammed top the chart with The Buddha too,  
but loving hearts may dial direct and so avoid the queue.

While touring China, the monuments were magnificent, the people were helpful, and an intriguing time was had. China is a land of contrasts. Although avowed communists, capitalism is everywhere. And whilst equality is proclaimed, women are conditioned to be second-class citizens, who long to give birth to their *little emperor*.

### **Yin & Yang**

China is changing  
Stark contrasts everywhere  
Metropolis megaliths  
Gleam from jaded soil  
Eternally gridlocked  
By limos belching smoke  
On peasants pushing bikes  
Beyond the city walls  
Multitudes till and toil  
Praying for city permits  
While dreaming paradise  
China is changing  
Yin and Yang remain

## **Jarred Minds**

The arrogance of ignorance  
Destroys informed debate  
As dogmatism adopts a stance  
Where arguments propagate hate  
:  
Then there's the curse of certainty  
To guarantee you're never wrong  
Which lets you doubt the sanity  
Of those with a different song  
:  
Being partial to prejudice  
Confuses myopic eyes  
For people suffering this  
Truth masquerades as lies

## **August 2001**

A party poem to celebrate the  
writer's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday - what a night!

### **Meter Reading**

Sixty thousand on the clock  
With a body looking mauled  
Replacements are out of stock  
And the tyres are turning bald

The water leaks and freezes  
And the leather's wearing thin  
But the horn amuses ladies  
As the headlights slowly dim

This motor had the muscles  
To match the engine's roar  
Now the exhaust trembles  
If someone slams the door

Alloy wheels hurtle past  
This rambling vintage car  
Unaware that it was cast  
To be a showroom star!

## Landscape

The sun peers down the sleepy valley  
scattering mists to rouse the day.  
Starlings flock for an early rally  
as watchful rabbits flee from play.  
Nearby a vole stays lost in duties  
unaware that a kestrel stares.  
Petals parade their pastel beauty  
in fields the lambs believe are theirs.

A balmy breeze forever teases  
wavy furrows through mottled grass.  
Cattle gather where pasture pleases  
while gypsy butterflies gladly pass.  
Majestic trees at regal distance  
offer their shade like times afar.  
A rustic gate has token presence  
for robbed of bolts it swings ajar.

Timely chimes from a wispy steeple  
startle herons along the stream.  
A charcoal cart is drawn by people  
whose dappled brushes gild the scene.

Rainbow meadows of mellow purpose  
bygone characters a village knew.  
Fading reflections still on canvas  
passing landscapes an artist drew.

## Voyages

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* \* \* \* \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

The tide surges moonlit as the ocean's daughter  
While the sand trickles down the Venus glass  
Our shimmering Star powers tropic waters  
So roving waves may trough then pass  
Yet were the Sun to forgo shining  
The faithful flow freezes fast  
Venus demands turning  
Or future is past  
Redemption  
Reflection  
Resumption  
Sand starts to grow  
Aboard the ship just cast  
A kind hand reversed the flow  
Name the Captain before the mast  
He's strode the deck on every voyage  
Across chartless seas both cruel and vast  
So restless souls might work their passage  
Till Salvation's sweet shore is sighted at last

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* \* \* \* \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

## City Till I Die

As I passed the turnstile, the Chairman whispered,  
‘Life can’t be all good,  
so I’m going to make you a City supporter.’

For exactly fifty years the writer made  
pilgrimages to Maine Road,  
with only ONE great team  
to justify the journey.  
(Joe Mercer RIP)

There’s a team the Reds liked to mock  
In a City where once they were Cock  
The ground had been cursed  
And to make matters worse  
Old Trafford was just round the block

\*\*\*\*\*

Times have changed.  
A Super Stadium  
More money than Midas  
Magical Management  
Walloping the Reds  
European Football

If it’s all a dream  
don’t wake me up!

**Naught but  
A Candle's Flicker  
across a celestial night**

The strength of life's primal shriek echoes like a battle cry  
for a babe that's born so weak beneath a Spartan sky.

If mother's milk or father's hand condone each wayward lurch  
then the ego may expand as Head of a wilful church.

Each long year of growing up is there for body and mind  
to savour the victor's cup in a race that's rarely kind.

Puberty brings muscular joy when seeking trophies new  
and power is the ego's toy, so conquests soon accrue.

Enter the man, brazen bold, a world beneath his feet  
with a pride that can't be sold as rivals meet defeat.

At his peak he stands tall, the grand master of the pack  
so if a friend's against the wall - no prize for looking back.

Life's encounters take their toll and failures now ensue  
as tired sinews refuse their role when time exacts its due.

He concedes he's getting old as his muscles once so strong  
barely fill a jelly mould and sway to forgotten songs.

Sunken eyes and furrows cast, this man who loathed defeat  
relives battles from his past as he fights for heart's next beat.

Bent and twisted by life's vain race his breath begins to fail  
meanwhile in a nearby place a baby starts to wail.

Some people shine as a beacon to others.  
John Malcolm is such a man.  
Thus it was a privilege to deliver this poem  
to help him celebrate his eightieth birthday  
with his fellow Salvationists.

### **Onward Christian Sailor**

We're sure of a swell celebration  
For Salvation's son of the sea  
The deck's awash with best wishes  
For a man as grand as can be

He's proud to be called patriotic  
On the convoys he couldn't wait  
To sail *Dunster Grange* to Gibraltar  
Or ammo' through the Arctic gate

John sounds the horn for Jesus  
Which makes him our first mate  
While on the ocean of knowledge  
The man says everything straight

He led the band down Dyer street  
While playing his tuba so-low  
And regarding marine engines  
There's little John doesn't know

This cabin's packed with admirers  
A crew that joyfully extends  
Eighty salutes to this sailor  
With Hallelujahs for our friend!

## **Balance Sheet**

At dealing's end when tills are closed  
it's time to pay the rent  
On deeds and debts not yet disposed  
and acts that you lament.

A balanced book may not impress  
so a surplus is desired  
On your attempts to relieve distress  
before the light grows tired.

The ledger closes as judgement day  
appraises life's amount  
Then profit and loss have their say  
in our auditor's account.

## The Path

The Universe is a mystery to those who do not know  
whose seeming contradictions allow endless tales of woe.

Yet peer a little deeper and the clouds begin to clear  
above a worldly oasis, where hope competes with fear.

Progress enfolds the covenant that seekers cross the line  
at each ordained encampment on the path to life divine.  
For the route from the Savannah to the realm of angel kind  
is as finely graduated as from stardust into mind.

So when you desire true wisdom, as other souls have done  
a timeworn trail emerges that unites you with the One.  
This journey needs a pilgrim who can shoulder a heavy cross  
around moral quagmires, with their signposts bent or lost.

The early steps are deeply trodden so take the first one now  
work hard and care for others, and prejudice disavow.  
Bring to heel your dark emotions; hate, pride and envy too  
for with the ego humbled, a lantern will interest you.

In an age of human turmoil, brief time goes rushing by  
demanding another deadline without explaining why.  
But slow the troubled breath and serenity will grow within  
then existence can be pondered as ambience starts to dim.

Meditation transcends the act of simply sitting still  
embracing boundless freedom when mind defers to will.

Feel the jubilation as you discover how to soar  
to joyous realms of graceful bliss that angels still adore.

Suddenly all the mysteries of time and space dissolve  
for we are sacred souls around which everything evolves.

Finally there's the revelation, of God's enduring plan  
to rapture all creation - and conclude as He began.

**2002**

In a family dedicated to celebrations, 40 years of wedded bliss  
could not pass unnoticed. It didn't ! Four generations of family  
and friends gave of their ruby best.

**My Family**

I've polished ample possessions while sampling life's success  
But against these passing blessings my family comes out best.  
For possessions are relinquished as success slips quickly past  
Whereas love that's equally cherished is the joy that lasts.

We pledged our lives together in a church that's built of stone  
And while weathering the seasons we've shared a happy home.  
Some marriages are made in heaven, others rue the day  
And the verdict on our wedding – mere words could never say.

So until my disappearance I'll share the time that's left  
With a woman whose appearance matches her youthful zest.  
Sons and daughters are disguised, but friends can clearly see  
They're cool and gritty, witty and wise - which resembles me?

(modesty forbids!)

## **The Professor and the Priest**

Said the Professor to the Priest:

‘Professors pursue real prizes but pious priests I deplore  
for chanting childish verses which echo on marble floors.  
Then you quote an ancient bible to justify human grief  
with a dogma that’s so tribal it incites the world beneath.

And instead of just enquiring why the cosmos still expands  
priests find it more appealing to repeat stories built on sand.  
For doubt is a distant stranger to minds that claim the truth  
which avoids the danger of your beliefs demanding proof.’

\*

And the Priest replied:

‘Professors hibernate in boxes and seldom peer outside  
at creations whose complexity surely dents their pride.  
And while you may insist that reality is quantum size  
add purpose to your list and you’ll realise God is wise.

Your soul's salvation requires a spiritual compass test  
as minds in meditation perceive the Absolute at rest.  
Then harmony lights the path for eternal souls to start  
transcending today’s reality of body, mind and heart.’

## A Town For All Seasons

Glossop  
Ancient & Modern

Sired by King Cotton in a time half forgotten  
High chimneys belched black as the night.  
'Tho'l valleys reet drab, from Tinsle t' Nab,  
An't folk are pov'rishd an' tite.'  
Families of clogs startled stray cats and dogs  
Scurrying t' mills in dire stitches.  
Where the rattles of shuttles, and tired muscles  
Helped weave the nation's great riches.  
Then two terrible wars suited new textile laws  
And chimneys soon lost their tall height.  
But from under the grime deposited by time  
A phoenix emerged proud and bright.

\*\*\*

The traffic stretches obliquely through arches  
Or snakes along twisting and tight.  
Past streams that dally down a timeless valley  
Into pools so sparkling and bright.  
All manner of parks, with squirrels and larks,  
Leisurely chronicle old pages.  
Like the Roman trail, cut through the dale  
To a fort defying the ages.  
Then trains and baths, or theatres for laughs,  
Border taverns of ancient delight.  
And a Victorian square has the bygone air  
Of a Lowry in sepia light.  
'Tho'l valleys reet grate, from Cuttin t' Gate,  
An't folk are gradely and spright'.  
So ask to be granted that you be transplanted  
To Glossop on the next balmy night.

## **Au Revoir**

1971-2008

Formations of faces devouring my notes  
Worried about exams and listening for quotes.  
Yet when a lecture was clever or boring  
Some jaded joker was verging on snoring.

Scholarship is worthy and should be preserved  
But times are changing and so must the words.  
Lectures are relevant when free of mildew  
So hearing an echo, say something that's new.

I'll cherish the triumphs that made me feel swell  
And forget those meetings that bordered on hell.  
Eloquence is a virtue to keep under wraps  
And not mimic water that gushes from taps.

Graduate students were always a joy  
Making clever equipment hum like a toy.  
Then a thesis that challenges knowledge  
Before celebrations outside the college.

My memories are sunny, cloudy or grey  
The triumph of science – but not every day.  
But this is behind me as each hand I shake  
And what of the future – clear or opaque?

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Advice to his Successor**

When targets are raised while your resources get cut  
Then research grants dry up and you hurt in the gut  
When the VC's glance is clinically cold  
Yet it's ages before you're retiringly old.

When each ring of the phone can tremble the soul  
And you ponder the merits of life on the dole  
When the department's future is as murky as mud  
Then this is the best time for that soak in the tub.

## **Writer's Block**

Trepidation, agitation, perspiration  
When will inspiration start to flow  
This week, next week, I don't know.

Irritation, aggravation, desperation  
Now resignation begins to show  
Put down my pen and off I go.

**Never!**

## Enlightenment

Within the scheme of things  
mortal flesh succumbs to life's passing seasons.  
So despite a lifetime's respect for mind and limb  
this collective construct must fade from importance.

Go quietly into the night  
confident that eternity remains intact.  
There are realms beyond crude matter  
and while reality is rarely glimpsed  
even a faint reflection of the Absolute  
heralds the bliss of oneness  
that is the birthright of creation.

\*\*\*\*\*

Certainty replaces confusion  
Once simplicity fades away  
And duplicity in life's illusion  
Is the price that aspirants pay

So if torment tries to engulf you  
On a night remorselessly black  
To the path stay steadfastly true  
Till a friend shoulders your pack

Your soul has evolved to the time  
When Maya serenely lifts  
And beliefs once seen as sublime  
Now rapture as radiant gifts

But because you'll not be the last  
To glimpse beauty behind the veil  
Your duty's to ready the mast  
When pilgrims are anxious to sail

# Titles by Raymond Leonard

## Poetry

Pearls Along The Path

## Novels

The Nostradamus Inheritance

OMEGA The Almighty

Spatel – The Silent Assassin

Mandalay

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## *Epilogue*

These poems paint two pictures  
Paradise and Hell  
Both paintings appear for sale  
Which canvas will sell?

