

# *In Place*

*Poems by Dean Carter*

## Introduction: Art and Inspiration

These poems are the result of being in a certain place, at a certain time. They start with the first poem of mine that I can now point to as being from a mature phase, 'Parliament Hill I'.

Prior to that I was an 'angry young man', and wrote angry young man poetry, which, apart from a few performances pieces, nobody liked. I did rather better as an angry young man lyricist and singer-songwriter, but never quite well enough to pay the rent. There was always, I think, at the back of my mind, the knowledge that to be angry and full of hate because the world was angry and full of hate was highly unlikely to change things very much! Coming from a generally spiritually retarded culture, (and certainly my early path and circumstances were spiritually deeply blind,) I had not yet come across the words of the Buddha from *The Dharmapada*:

*In this world hate never yet dispelled hate.  
Just as fire cannot destroy fire  
Anger cannot destroy anger,  
Hate never yet dispelled hate:  
Only love dispels hate.  
This is the Law,  
The ancient and immutable.*

What brought about change for me, and therefore these poems, was the slow painful realisation that the materialist lie within which I was attempting to make sense of the world would never work. Realising myself also to be in a place of utter despair despite having to some extent realised my 'dream' of becoming a musician, on December 31<sup>st</sup> 1993 I made the one New Year's Resolution I have ever made in my life. It was 'Change or die.'

The means to change I used initially were Holotropic Breathwork and hypnotherapy, both forms of therapy which acknowledge the existence of the transpersonal. I knew from previous disappointing experience that mere talking therapy didn't work. Several years further down the line I now know why that is: the limited ego-mind is that which in meditation we attempt to by-pass or de-energise, certainly to disidentify with. The babblers, the talker, the noise-maker in the head, what one tradition refers to as the *parasite* in the head, is, in fact, where the problem lies.

And then, having started to gain occasionally a moment's respite from the parasite's incessant chatter, the poems started to come. I well remember that first sunset on Parliament Hill, and how, in an attitude of mental quiet and receptivity, all I had to do was look about me, and the lines just came. It is this attitude of mental quiet, essentially a meditative

state, that I now identify as the state in which true poetry can come through. True enough, the intuitive impulses which then come from the great silence have to be fashioned into words, so we're some extent back to the ego-mind. But some flavour, some atmosphere, of the infinitely creative capital-M Mind which lies below our busy surface mind then shines through, and it is, as all artists in all periods have pointed out, merely a matter of taking dictation. One is no longer trying, the ego is out of the way.

My own judgements as to the success or failure of anything I write now then are simply along the lines of 'did I get my ego out of the way enough for what had to be said to be said?' I am not interested in poetry as the mere self-referential linguistic game that it became in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, divorced from either reality or from people's hearts. I am not interested in mind-chatter, however many grotesque forms it might be twisted into in the name of pseudo-poetry, pseudo art.

The appropriate silences in my own mental chatter usually came while walking in nature. How amazed I was when, for example, the lines to 'Hascombe Hill' came in the course of a two-hour walk in the woods there, and I was able to write every line down perfectly finished when I came back from that walk!

I didn't know then that what was happening to me, in the presence of the beauty of Nature, was in effect natural and spontaneously arising meditation, but having now investigated 'formal' meditation through the insights of great spiritual teachers for our times such as Paul Brunton, Eckhart Tolle, and Ramana Maharshi, I now am in a position to understand that this was so. These teachers all emphasise that meditation, far from an obscure and esoteric pursuit of the few, is the *natural* state of mental peace which, when it arises for most of us, is then dismissed by our ego-mind as irrelevant compared with our frantic, apparently 'terribly important' mental activity—and to the ego-mind it *is* important because without this 'mind-chatter' it (the ego) doesn't exist. Formal meditation is simply the application of various practices which allow us to regularly and systematically enjoy this sublime and peaceful state, and to be able to recognise it for what it is, rather than to have the experience but 'miss' it in order to get on with what we think is our life, but what is really *the life of this mental parasite, which uses us as its host*.

So, my obeisances to all my masters in human form, but most of all to Nature. The one thread of my previous intellectual life (for example my degree) that I can look back on with approval now is my love of the Romantics, of Wordsworth, Blake and Coleridge especially, and it is to Coleridge that I turn now to, as it were, frame this collection with his words. May all of you who read these poems feel the benefit of what Dylan Thomas called 'the force that through the green fuse drives the flower' which is in itself is their source, and their real author.

With other ministrations thou, O Nature!  
Healest thy wandering and distempered child:  
Thou pourest on him thy soft influences,  
Thy sunny hues, fair forms, and breathing sweets,  
Thy melodies of woods, & winds, & waters,  
Till he relent, and can no more endure  
To be a jarring and a dissonant thing  
Amid this dance and general minstrelsy;  
But, bursting into tears, wins back his way,  
His angry spirit heal'd and harmonised  
By the benignant touch of Love and Beauty.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

‘The Dungeon’

## *Title/location*

**Parliament Hill I**, Hampstead Heath, London  
**Beach I**, Bournemouth, Dorset  
**Beach II**, Portobello, Edinburgh  
**Prothalamion**, South Bank, London  
**Stow Bardolph**, Norfolk  
**Downham Market**, Norfolk  
**Windermere**, Ambleside, Cumbria  
**Parliament Hill II**, Hampstead Heath, London  
**From The Pier**, Bournemouth, Dorset  
**Hascombe Hill**, Surrey  
**Another Dawn**, Downham Market, Norfolk  
**Sanctuary**, Bincombe Beeches, Crewkerne, Somerset  
**Burton Bradstock**, Hive Beach, Burton Bradstock, Dorset  
**Ground Luminosity**, West Chinnock Hill, Somerset  
**Truce**, Hazelbury Plucknet, Somerset  
**Mass**, Chalice Well, Glastonbury, Somerset  
**Incarnadine**, Glastonbury Tor, Somerset  
**The Shining Land**, Crewkerne, Somerset  
**Montacute**, St. Michael's Hill, Montacute, Somerset  
**Lyme Epiphany**, Lyme Regis, Dorset  
**Field Study**, Hedgecock Hill, Somerset  
**Finite Organical Home**, North Perrott, Somerset  
**Line**, Lyme Regis, Dorset  
**From Golden Cap**, Golden Cap, Dorset  
**Wave**, Lyme Regis, Dorset  
**Undercliff**, The Undercliff, Lyme Regis, Dorset  
**Coney's Castle**, Coney's Castle, Dorset  
**Camelot**, Cadbury Castle, Somerset  
**Golden Eminence**, Golden Cap, Dorset  
**Reflections**, Berry Head, Brixham, Devon  
**Sea**, Anchorite's Rock, Devon  
**Sea-saw**, Lizard Point, Devon  
**World Wide Web**, Wayford Wood, Somerset  
**Landlover**, Dodpen Hill, Dorset/Crewkerne, Somerset  
**Uncertainty**, Golden Cap, Dorset  
**Disengage**, Cadbury Castle, Somerset  
**Presence**, Tut Hill, Dorset  
**Sherborne Castle**, Sherborne, Dorset  
**Patson Hill**, Patson Hill, Dorset  
**Hambledon Hill**, Hambledon Hill, Childe Okeford, Dorset  
**The Firth Of Forth**, Earlsferry, Fife  
**Ruin**, Elie, Fife  
**Merman**, Elie, Fife  
**Lake**, Sherborne Castle, Dorset  
**Off The Rails**, Cadbury Castle, Somerset  
**The Animation**, Port Meadow, Oxford  
**A Clear Path**, Sherborne Castle, Dorset  
**Giving Tongue**, Salisbury Cathedral, Wiltshire  
**'Everything Is Broken Up, And Dances'**, Cadbury Castle, Somerset  
**Chesil Beach**, Chesil Beach, Dorset

**The Temple**, Jerusalem Hill, Sherborne Park, Dorset  
**Thanksgiving**, Sherborne Park, Dorset  
**Shore**, Lyme Regis, Dorset  
**Maestro**, Sherborne Lake, Dorset  
**Sandford Orcas Road**, between Sandford Orcas and Sherborne, Dorset  
**Light's Golden Doubloons**, Giant Hill Wood, Cerne Abbas, Dorset  
**St. Catherine's Well**, Cerne Abbas, Dorset  
**Jerusalem**, Jerusalem Hill, Sherborne Park, Dorset  
**South Petherton**, St. Peter and St. Paul's Churchyard, SP, Somerset  
**An Embrace Of Water**, Otter Estuary, Budleigh Salterton, Devon  
**In This Woodland's Still Cathedral**, Kingston Plantation, Norfolk  
**Lyme Beach**, Lyme Regis, Dorset  
**Wonderful**, Hillfield Hill, Dorset  
**April's Stolen A March On Me**, Sherborne Lake, Dorset

# Parliament Hill.

## I

*A proprietary crow struts  
Beneath the setting sun.  
Below me, like a child's game,  
A splayed London-  
Here a bit properly finished,  
With a child's intense concentration,  
There a stupid jumble,  
Tatty, barely begun.  
Here the upturned table  
Of Battersea Power Station,  
There, a flock of children's arms  
Waving to get the teacher's attention—  
The jostle of The City, vying  
For the gold of the sun.  
Jets revolve tirelessly  
On their carousels.  
Maybe it's just one jet,  
Caught in a magic spell  
That's robbed it also of its voice-  
I ask the moon, but it won't tell.  
(The moon's too busy running fingers  
Along night's coverlet,  
And dreaming up the things  
That haven't happened to us yet.)  
Tireless too the belching  
Crematorium stack  
Of a Whittington no bells now  
Have the power to call back.  
There are five people in the world-  
Myself, four dots that move.  
The child's swing sings a jarring song-  
I am iron the wind loves.*

19/8/94

# *beach I*

*magpie  
moonrise  
on a sunset salmon-silver sea  
a*

*wavesong soundwaves  
spiralling  
in hissing symphony*

*cloudswirl rainbow  
patterns  
like a child's bubble's dreams*

*this dusk, as at the dawn  
heeded or not  
each songbird sings*



# *beach II*

*Sands*  
*the score*  
*of some wave-woven fugue,*  
*its intertwining themes*  
*brown,*  
*yellow,*  
*pink,*  
*silver,*  
*purple,*  
*white.*

*At*  
*the shoreline, mother-of-pearl,*  
*the sea has divulged a secret,*  
*clusters of shells like hands,*  
*clutching, unclutching,*  
*clasping, unclasping,*  
*to the sea's in....out....in....out*  
*breathing.*

*Shiny shore-mirror, faintly*  
*echoing,*  
*caressing, yule-pale cloud.*

*Bare cupfuls of sunlight to go around,*  
*yet each grain of the*  
*sand*  
*of this boreal*  
*strand*  
*glows with its own inner*  
*radiance.*

# *Prothalamion.*

‘Sweet Thames run softly, till I end my song...’ Edmund Spenser, *Prothalamion*,  
1596.

## *Enchanter:*

hanging a comet’s tail  
on each embankment star,  
your black gloss flesh  
festooned now  
with a hundred midnight  
fire-flowers,  
golden globes  
and silver towers.

## *Toiler:*

carrying clouds  
on your broad back  
to dump them in the sea,  
deliverer of people,  
goods, and History.

## *Mirror:*

reflecting Full Ben, and a Big Moon  
mimicking each other.

The nymphs are departed.  
This place is deserted,  
deliciously.

This black water-snake’s  
strange, earthy scent  
sniffed only by these twisted fish  
and me.

The nymphs and their polyglot  
sensation-slaves  
are thronging, pissed, ripped,  
and puking in droves  
in Leicester Square, Old Compton Street  
and Charing Cross Road,  
desperately seeking something  
they're barely aware they're missing,  
while at my feet the river's whispering  
in accents clean and pure  
of far away hills and fields  
in Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire,  
and the velvet sky's so close I swear  
I could reach out and touch its fur.

Bells float down upstream, beats  
of Albion's giant heart.  
How often drunkenly have I  
groped London like a neon tart?  
But tonight blessings descend,  
and in this peace I've found  
her still radiant soul  
of diamond.

May my friends' union  
be abundant, fruitful, strong,  
sustaining and enriching  
as this once more sacred river runs.

And may I too find  
as beautiful a moon to match my sun,  
and, like this river,  
a marriage of Earth and Heaven.

## Stow Bardolph

*Sitting by a formal pond,  
The meeting of three worlds, I muse on mind-  
Gold gleams dart through sunken murk-  
And pray that calm might sometime bring an end  
To the winds of passion that distort  
These images of trees, and sky behind.*

Stow Bardolph, Norfolk  
26/7/97

## Downham Market

A billion leaves are hymning in  
The glory of the dawn,  
Moved by the self-same breath that left  
Yesterday`s rose petals strewn  
In brutalised disorder  
Across the well kept lawns.

Downham Market, Norfolk  
27/7/1997

# Windermere

After a sunless day  
This sunset breaks like a dawn  
Upon the silver-silken lake  
That meditates soundlessly upon  
Waves of fire, breaking in sprays of blood  
The far mountains beyond.

West lies death and mystery.  
Sunset marks day's exit wound.  
As the scarab of the sun  
Rolls this ball of dung the Earth  
Always in the same direction,  
The East becomes the eye of life,  
Beginning and of birth.

So as Time rolls toward us  
Inexorably, we plunge headfirst-  
The waters of morning breaking around-  
Into each new day's birth,  
Shielded by sunlight from night's immensities  
Until darkness falls  
To spew at us swans and lyres,  
Dragons and dolphins,  
Maidens and bulls.

Now as the lake, dumb with wonder,  
Mirrors a bridge of stars,  
And the brief showers of gold  
That are falling meteors,  
The massive silence is broken  
By a boreal, alien sound-  
The guttural, desolate honking of geese  
Resonating the hills around.

Waterhead, Lake Windermere, Cumbria  
6/8/1997

# Parliament Hill.

## II

*Normally wrapped in a noxious, toxic, frowsy haze-  
A bleary partygoer up, hungover, at midday-  
With the first busy winds of Autumn scrubbing the air clean,  
Lit by a low sun, London lies majestic and serene.*

*This writhing knot of passion, frustration, frantic motion,  
Is charmed by light and distance into a waveless ocean.  
All that manic anthill panic, tension, hustle, violence,  
Wears a robe of quiet, an exquisite gown of silence.*

*It's this garb of stillness lends the moment such perfection.  
Time's frozen to present to me for my inspection  
The beautiful absoluteness, the absolute beauty,  
That usually lies unnoticed inside and outside me.*

*I look out on ten million hearts, shell-shocked by soul-erosion,  
Or wound by disappointment nearly up to an explosion-  
Yet serenity has cast its spell, transmuting meanness,  
Greed, dirt, and stupidity, to love, and light, and cleanness.*

*Perspective has redeemed a rubbish-heap of spite and squander  
Into a bright Jerusalem of golden inward splendour,  
Realised externally in this fleet sunset vision  
Which lets me see how we could all break free from self-made prisons.*

*Beauty, as we know, lies in the eye of the beholder.  
Beatify perception, and we'll stand shoulder to shoulder,  
Awakened from the dullness that makes mundane our vision,  
And, clarified, in and outside, accomplish then our mission.*

## *From The Pier*

*the land laughs back at me,  
an elegant beauty, wearing the foam-collared  
living jade cloak of the sea.*

*The sea is not green as grass is green,  
is an animate creature of aquamarine,  
a breathing, twitching, feeding, bewitching  
light loving being  
of glassy emerald gelatin;  
a chaos brain, generating  
patterned waves of wave patterns,  
fragmented whirling geometries  
emblazoned on its skin.*

*The dance of living light fractals,  
bubble clusters, foam networks,  
the graph curve of shoreline shell distribution-  
all signs for the avid God-spotter,  
clues to the affair between spirit and matter.  
God may play with dice,  
may be mad as a hatter,  
may be the dormouse or the teapot,  
the clay, the wheel, the potter,  
may be hidden or be manifested  
in this moving mass of water.*

# Hascombe Hill

On this supremely still October day  
The sponge that is my soul is surfeited on gold and  
grey.

The acorn's glossy skin reflects the sky.  
Leaves underfoot crunch powdery as snow.  
Everything's dry.

Fall's fantastic fungus-flowers sprout.  
My heart beats now disburdened of all doubt.

Fragrant with spores and scent of fine decay  
This deep, maturer-coloured counterpart of May.  
Seasoning-season: not raging `at the dying of the  
light',  
But calmly acknowledging the nearness of the night,  
The man of many winters surely knows  
Life ends not with the fall of winter's snows.

From faith alone can understanding spring  
Of death's dark necessary part of life's unbroken  
ring.

Accept the ageless law of paradox-  
What can you do but smile at fortune's clumsily-  
staged shocks?

Resting still within myself upon a day so still,  
Like an acorn in its cup, no more a stranger to God's  
will.



## Another Dawn.

They do good skies here.  
In fact here in these levels  
There is not land but skyscape,  
A wideness in which stars, clouds and moons  
Can run wild, go play to their heart's content.

Like now.  
A great unhurried cloud formation is splayed,  
Shifts as her sun lover transforms her,  
Licks her with light into flushed pink fire,  
Arouses her soft greys with suffused roseate hues.

Beams of brightness, golden fingers,  
Start to poke through,  
Now with a sigh of light comes the dawn,  
A yellow-green clearness of sky nodding approval.

Next act in today's show  
Plasticine plaything of refraction,  
The sun shaped like a golden egg sits  
Cozy in a cup of cloud  
While beams of yolky light run down-  
The sun-king on his throne.

Another dawn  
Another effortless living masterpiece,  
A labour of aeons, already faded,  
Never to be gallery incarcerated.  
This work of art ever moves on  
Taking wonderful form upon form,  
The Great Artist's Great Work-  
Creation.

# *Sanctuary*

*At the door of this living cathedral  
Of rock, soil, cloud,  
Beech, oak, congregated,  
I claim sanctuary.*

*I claim sanctuary  
From my own stupidity,  
From my own naivety,  
From my own rapacity.*

*After blundering like a wounded animal  
Through the undergrowth of life,  
Here  
The finely sculpted clouds  
At the other side of sunset  
Hold the light for me-  
A black crow flashes  
A white underwing  
In welcome.*

# Burton Bradstock

Pebbles

Held in the sea's mouth,  
Receiving benediction of her spit,  
Become glossy jewels.

I could be happy here,  
Sorting them, unsorting them, thus  
Aimlessly.

Holding them up  
To see the light slither off them,  
As, at my feet,  
Eternity  
Laps rhythmically.

Hive Beach, Burton Bradstock, Dorset  
5/10/1998

# Ground Luminosity.

A field of wind brushed grass-  
A crowd, a host, of angels  
Going crazy with praise,  
Waving and shouting for joy  
At the amazing privilege of being.  
How can you be sad or bored?  
Now October's unlocked its fabulous hoard  
There's plenty of emerald, sapphire, ruby and gold to go around  
*Above* the ground.  
Crystal light from the jewelled sun  
Is split by the waving oak's prism,  
Spilt into this vessel of love,  
As all the world over  
Flows, pours in each pore,  
Until I become light-saturated,  
Until I, like all the world,  
(I like all the world!)  
Am revealed as nothing but stained glass  
Sustained, animated, still or in movement,  
By light.  
My spine to the earth like a needle on a dial  
I gauge the world's turning,  
The brotherhood of the clouds,  
The odysseys of the falling leaves,  
The rising and falling of the abiding hills  
Like green waves on an exquisitely slow sea,  
The continents liquid as language.  
The luminosity of the ground  
Is inescapable among these shining hills,  
Incandescent with their own  
Goldenemerald, eternalephemeral  
Glory.  
The hidden stars and the mud and me-  
Threads on the weft of eternity.

West Chinnock Hill, Somerset  
11/10/1998

# TRUCE

On this day as packed with light as is a peach with juice,  
The two sides in the battle of my heart have reached a  
truce.

All things are well and all always well shall be.

Everything is luminous,  
Everything is numinous,  
Life a wondrous Chinese lantern  
Lit from the inside.

Every green hill waves  
To its neighbour.  
Each of the eighteen frames a second  
The eye paints for the mind  
Is an undisputed masterpiece.  
Each breath a flag planted  
On a hitherto unclimbed peak.

With a roaring of innumerable whispers  
The trees of the wood accept  
The turning of the year.  
Autumn's gory nakedness  
Reminds me more of birth than death.

I wish I could be more like the trees.  
They never have to ask themselves if *they*  
Brought down the storm, the axe,  
Winter's uncouth denuding.

## Mass.

At moments like these I can see  
Why we come into this strange reality  
Of density, intensity,  
Endure the darkness, doubt and dis-ease.  
For when the placid gold light  
From these crisping leaves,  
November's refugees,  
Falls on my eyes' palate to dissolve  
Fine as vintage wine,  
As much in the presence of God myself I hold  
As any discarnate angel.

All of creation  
Slips into our senses  
As the body of the Divine  
If we celebrate  
Mass.

If we celebrate, not denigrate  
The medium we've chosen.  
We're not here because we've fallen,  
But because we're on a mission  
To explore every issue  
In this solid world fictitious.

When the plot has twisted and twisted and twisted,  
And we get round the bend we thought not to see  
through,  
And the scenery-shifters lift the storm,  
And the stars that we've missed once again come in  
view,

When the millions of years have unravelled  
Hissing like snakes into a calm point,  
We incarnate angels should pat ourselves on the  
back  
(Are our wings still on?)  
For the courage we display in simply being here,  
For our second by second bravery in staying.

I'd like to propose a new variation  
On Einstein's famous formula.  
E=mc squared might also read  
Enlightenment equals mass-consciousness  
Shared.

Chalice Well, Glastonbury, Somerset  
25/11/98

# *Incarnadine*

*Shed red leaves incarnadine  
The foot of Glastonbury Tor,  
Reminiscent of another  
Bloodied hill in Palestine.  
Naked trees gape at grey skies  
And cage the clouds that dance within,  
Slack-jawed, relieved now  
Of their burden.*

*I'd never have believed Lord,  
I'd never have believed  
That the mob inside could be  
transformed, made  
Innocent as children,  
With the child's absolute belief  
So cruelly betrayed  
By the adult that thinks  
This great gift to abandon.*

*In the name of-what, exactly?  
Prudence? Caution? Worldly `wisdom`?  
Ceaselessly we crucify our children.*



# *The Shining Land*

*Love made this land,  
Sculpted its contours,  
Carved out its combs and knolls.  
The Carver gave forth of his soul,  
The Goddess brought forth stream and hill  
For us to delight  
In our life in.*

*Take but a small step out of the High Street,  
Out of the traffic of our concerns,  
And prophetic solitude is upon you.  
Silence, earthscent, branchsong, birdcall,  
Cloud, light, beauty attend you  
Like a host of angels.  
The winter sun makes his smiling way so low  
Over the hills, waving like an early aviator  
You want to shake his hand,  
For with his blessing  
This land shines  
As clear as any star in heaven.*

*And, yes, the High Street must be returned to,  
Food bought, Mammon propitiated,  
But bringing back with you this planet's love,  
This love of the planet, over counters tired  
Harried faces break into slightly puzzled smiles...  
If we could all do this often enough,  
Step out into Love and bring Love back with us back in,  
A reconnection might be nurtured  
Twixt heart/mind, need/want,  
Soil/flesh, doing/being,  
Body/soul, earth/sky,  
Child/parent, self/other,  
And maybe we'll awake from millennia of trauma  
Daring once again to believe in a future.*

Crewkerne, Somerset  
4/12/1998

# MONTACUTE

*The greenwood sparkles in the sun.  
Each rain-polished leaf juggles the light,  
So that shafts momentarily blindingly bright  
Dance into the eyes, bouncing off every one  
Of the million facets of this vast earth jewel.  
Watch the circling buzzards wheel  
In scented silence to your own heart's song.  
Breathe in balm to all hurt, disappointment and  
wrong.  
No method required, no guru, no creed-  
Nature gives us all the therapy we need.  
Let hers and hers alone be the book in which you  
read.*

St. Michael's Hill, Montacute, Somerset  
16/1/1999

# *Lyme Epiphany.*

Conjured from nowhere this drab afternoon  
flowing forms and tableaux, colours and hues,  
pale emerald, rose, silver, gold, blue,  
as sea, sun, land, light, cloud  
clash and collide.

A thousand shapes and shades of grey alone  
scoot across sky;  
wave patterns  
wave,  
numberless  
coruscations

of the neverstill sea-brain,  
its inexhaustible thoughts unfolding,  
quietly sighing onto the shore's lap.

The Cobb's encircling arm a free gallery,  
each salt-pocked and storm-tongued slab worked  
into a separate framed abstract.

The pastel dabbed town placed by the landscaper  
precisely, among green hills,  
the seagulls dislodged by a shallow-splashing dog,  
all peaceful clarity bar  
the raw tarty rasp of arcade neon  
shrill as a blackboard fingernail  
shrieking across the eye.

Low light intensity, it seems,  
is, after quisling odysseys under desert skies  
quite adequate for me.

From my journeys I return  
to no wife, no son, kingdom none,  
to nothing but this relationship  
between creator, creation, I.

I guess I'll be alone  
until I find a mind with whom I can commune  
wordlessly, without comparison or commentary,  
on all the sounds and sights of an ostensibly  
dull afternoon.

24/1/1999  
Lyme Regis, Dorset

# Field Study.

The ploughed field leaps up the hill,  
Furrows pressing against the woodland's fence  
Like waves rushing into the shore.

*As a parent or a lover  
Might tenderly take brush and comb  
To the hair of child or beloved,  
Tractors lovingly groom  
This very soil I tread upon,  
Earthflesh, rich, ruddy loam.  
The Earthsea's frozen labia  
Gape open, invite me home.  
In a thousand share-sculpted attitudes  
Of ecstasy they groan  
At the furrowing intrusion  
With longing for the seed to come.*

Hedgecock Hill, Somerset  
7/2/1999

# **FINITE ORGANICAL HOME.**

Isiah answer'd: 'I saw no God, nor heard any, in a finite organical perception; but my senses discover'd the infinite in everything, and as I was then perswaded, & remain confirm'd, that the voice of honest indignation is the voice of God, I cared not for consequences, but wrote.' *Blake, The Marriage Of Heaven And Hell.*

Home.

I never knew I had a home.

It took being lost in a land with no sky

To teach me I do. Home is

*Here-*

Robin's song pours down

Like crystal water

From an eternally over-

Flowing cup of wonder!

What a gift, to be drenched in song,

To have ones soul-thirst slaked

Thus, amid twittering twilight

Stillness.

An infinite loving cup overflowing with endless more

Is to be found in the gap

Between one heartbeat, one breath, one thought, one moment

And the next.

*Now-*

Blue clouds

Devise an instant skyline mountain range,

And the rest of heaven is assembled

With inconceivable artistry, patience.

Live here, now, fully in the moment,

Knowing here, now, the moment, no more exist

Than future or past speculative or fled.

We can say there is only the present

But in saying that the present has vanished.

If we point to the present,

We are pointing at its ghost.

A 'moment' is the mind's attempt to cage

The immeasurable flow of Time's river.

The mind is the child on the shore

Busy with its game of sorting the pebbles.

The mind is the idiot on the strand

Happy in his self appointed task

Of cataloguing the waves.

The soil has been worked over by

Remorseless spades, forks and hoes  
Of sharp ice and angry wind and rain.  
Broken up, it lies ready for seeding,  
Like me, like me.  
Buffeted about by heart`s winter  
I wait like this gashed land, Gaia,  
Sheena-na-Gig, gagging for pregnancy.  
What little monsters will this year spew up?  
What dragon-teeth-sowed warriors  
Will rise from the earthsea?

Even here, on the wind, traffic`s  
Pale, backbrain nagging, aural slow-bruise.  
We have transport, but are rarely transported.  
We can be everywhere, but we are nowhere.

Except in moments rare, such as this.  
Now/here, I feel somewhere. And earlier, where  
The sense of green light breaking forth  
From the corners of all the hills,  
Of ranks of green spears rising, rising  
From the earthsea  
Spoke to me.  
I cannot put a name to what was felt,  
I have yet to learn *Its* language,  
Perhaps untranslatable.  
After all the harm we`ve done,  
We should count ourselves blessed  
That things still speak to us in *any* tongue.  
I am content that no `answer`, in human language,  
Can be distilled from what I thought/perceived.  
There may never be one.  
The reality, validity, of my reaction,  
Unverifiable to anything or one outside myself  
Confirms to me *Its* reality, validity.  
This paradox must be what they mean by faith.  
I feel fully alive again, fully somewhere again,  
I feel once again a sense that life can truly be lived,  
Fully inhabited, here, in these muck spattered fields and lanes,  
The `finite organical` pointing to the infinite,  
The much revealing the more.

North Perrott, Somerset  
19/2/1999

## line

This strand,  
Sea, cliffs, and sky beyond,  
A canvas, upon which  
A Universal Mind  
Plays with colour, form,  
Shape, shade and line.  
Today I'm aware  
Particularly of *line*-  
Parallel wobbly crenellations  
In wave shuffled sand,  
Concentric gash-shoals in a pool  
Momentarily brushed by wind,  
The ragged white advancing/retreating  
Vanguard/rearguard of foam.  
Each moment an unerring brushstroke made  
As only greatness can.  
The sky, already a masterpiece,  
(Blue Sea, Pale Cloud Armada Garlanded),  
Inverted, impressionistically-imitated,  
Then blurred into abstraction  
In the miracle mirror  
Of the shore's wet flatness.  
The fossil-flushed cliffs' strata,  
Groaning with aeon-hoarded data,  
Shine in the eight minute old light  
That bursts past passing cloud-  
The past reflecting the past.  
Time and space, our seeming prison,  
Revealed as nothing more than  
The canvas The Creator likes to work upon,  
And you, and I, and now, and now, and now,  
The Artist's medium.

Lyme Regis, Dorset, 21/2/1999

## *From Golden Cap*

*Where distance tints the green hills blue  
As they kiss sea and sky`s shining rim,  
I feel as if I am looking  
Both forwards and backwards in time,  
To a far off place I am not now at,  
But may be, may have been.*

*Landseasky together sealed  
In holy trinity,  
Uniting present, future, past,  
All that is, all that was, that can be.*

Golden Cap, Dorset,  
26/3/1999



# Wave

sitting at the foot  
of blue vast circling  
eternity

waves of phenomena and event  
crash in upon the shore of `me`  
I try to decode the hypnotic light  
displays sparkling on the sea

tendencies towards form lap  
at my feet soothingly  
wrapped in randomness  
fittingly  
inside me outside me  
internally externally

I the cliff  
I the cloud

I a wave in the sea  
I a wave of the sea

lyme regis, dorset  
28/3/1999

## *Undercliff*

*The sostenuto sea behind enchanted wood and glade-  
The bluebells´ silent song, a colour carillon-cascade-  
With wild garlic-scented birdsong senses caressing,  
Life, so often seeming like a curse, revealed as  
blessing.*

*More mute music I hear.  
Like fiddles erupting into song  
Scroll-ferns are unfurling.  
Spring  
Is sprung!*

*The only season that´s also a verb  
Is the vernal.*

*Spring  
Hopes  
Eternal.*

# Coney's Castle

*Light strides across the hills, golden.  
To be like that, to nothing and nobody beholden...*

*Clouds fill the sky  
As thoughts fill my mind;  
Ragged, wispy, solid, stately,  
Parts of a mass, or a group,  
Or alone.  
The Artist is playing as ever  
With colour, texture, tone.  
Their shadows empurple the sea,  
Slats of maroon, slabs of aquamarine,  
While, further out, a hazy rain blind  
Is drawn down to the horizon.*

*I sit and dream up  
Worlds on worlds.  
Through my mind's sky drift  
Snatches of broadcasts from alien stations,  
Dialogue, pictures, plays, situations...  
Am I picking up something that really exists?  
Is it just my imagination?*

*Is there any difference?*

Land, sea and sky, field, hedge, bird, stream and wood  
Spoke to me today, and I thought I understood,  
And I thought I had the answer-but it seems to be our  
fate  
That into human language it simply won't translate.

# Camelot

looking out this evening as Arthur must have done  
from this very citadel on isles of glass and seas of green  
such clarity! each grass-stem lit with love by the sun  
such detailed elfin harmony, horizon to horizon  
try telling me this isn't heaven  
try telling me this isn't heaven

barely perceptibly the dusk is gathering-  
at the sky's corners a faint vermilion shading  
while with the sun's solemn ritual of disappearing  
we can see the very world turning  
be amazed, for all is amazing  
seek not for miracles, you'll be disappointed  
until you can see all you take for granted-  
your heart pumping,  
day into night/night into day mutating,  
as amazing  
how will you see beyond  
if you've made of the amazing the mundane?  
every moment of your life  
could be the most incredible moment of your life  
how are you, you alone,  
stopping that from happening?

now above floats a gibbous moon  
close seeming as a child's lost balloon  
and the stars come out like friendly lights  
on neighbouring hills  
and lights on neighbouring hills come out  
like friendly stars

cadbury castle, somerset  
23/7/1999

# *Golden Eminence.*

*The golden bow  
Of the beach below  
Makes musical moan.*

*On this prominence  
I am alone  
And not alone.*

*With this exquisite sky for company  
A cloud/shade/light/colour concerto  
Unfolds on my senses with every moment,  
Words fail, but I feel I now know  
How the manuscript paper must have felt  
Underneath Mozart's hands.  
Our lives are part of a design  
Harmonious and grand.*

**Golden Cap, Dorset  
2/7/1999**

# *Reflections*

*toweringly curious  
leaving a path of whiteness  
clouds gather to peer into  
sea's aquamaroon looking-glass  
burnishing colours with faint effects  
of paleness burred upon  
pastel-subtle haziness*

*above my head  
wind whistling  
a kite song  
through a gull's wing*

*awareness falling  
of the living work of art  
that is life itself  
of the living work of life  
that is art itself*

**Berry Head, Brixham, Devon  
7/8/1999**

# sea

infinitely faceted jewel glistening  
moving, breathing, kissed by the sun  
innumerable separate points of light  
unfathomably yet one

wave patterns manifesting  
endless variations on  
one theme  
the theme of one

I'm gazing upon  
the beautiful face  
of living paradox  
within uniformity  
infinite variety

anchorite's rock, devon  
12/8/1999

## **sea-saw**

wave-like sprays  
of rock, displays  
of movement so slow  
unmoving  
they seem  
cliff torso  
earth limb  
by the sea-saw  
hacked open, laid bare  
fantastic, frozen-flowing forms  
unveiled by each storm  
geology's anatomy  
revealed by erosion  
each scalpel stroke  
of the unending operation  
an aeon

**Lizard Point, Devon**  
**12/8/1999**



# World Wide Web.

light  
beams  
to-ing  
fro-ing  
on breeze-teased  
web-thread

sparks emanating  
from a tiny being  
at the heart of a glass-etching  
universe of its own creating

I'm mesmerised this whole morning  
by light as if on water playing  
through gently-blown geometries  
swaying

such delicate perfection  
of intention!  
hard, sometimes, such to discern  
behind the patterning  
of the webs *we* spin  
the agony *we're* in

Wayford Wood, Somerset  
20/8/1999

## *Landlover*

Lightshow through late summer's heavy canopy,  
streaming  
On rain-lashed, fragrant pathways, from the heat now  
steaming.  
Through the boughs a stained-glass meadow fiercely  
blazing  
In that sun-shining-after-rain edenic light you get,  
amazing.

Days later and my love's resigned to overcast  
dreaming.  
There's silence save for traffic's faint infection.  
No birds sing.  
In the jade cave of an August wood I feel I've touched  
the rain-wet soul  
Of my lover, England. Only in her  
I am whole.

I'm becoming a landscape voyeur.  
I just want more and more of her,  
In her winter nakedness,  
In her summer floral dress,  
My every step amidst her beauties  
A caress.

22nd, 26th August 1999  
Dodpen Hill, Dorset,  
Bincombe Beeches, Crewkerne, Somerset.

# Uncertainty.

*Ungainly, unGodly, I traipse  
Where wind-blast thorn trees nakedly gape;  
The hawk nailed to the sky keeps the sky in place;  
On the shore below waves are dealt in shapeless  
shapes.*

*Crinkling, nibbling, nattering, quibbling,  
Stuttering, stumbling, the waves roll in.  
The birdsong that I hear seems from some far off  
time,  
Every thought I have bubbles up in rhyme.*

*This clifftop was once the bottom of the sea.  
In the future we can't say where any point will be.  
Everything is relative, there is no fixity,  
All's speculative, there's only one certainty-*

## Disengagement.

*Lift yourself from the struggle,  
Disengage, even a little,  
And we see that just to walk upon  
This green and golden Earth  
Is a miracle.*

*Realising this is  
The tearing of the veil:  
Clarity, a clean wind, comes  
Bounding over field and hill  
Obfuscation to annul.  
The eye clears, the fog  
About the heart disappears.  
Life`s true riches, invisible,  
Intangible, inexplicable,  
Start pouring through the eye of the needle.*

*Turning today from toil  
I sit upon a green hill  
And I dream...  
That is this human being.  
That is who and what I am.  
Dazzlingly, fiercely beautiful  
This amazing universe of mine.  
Be, love, part of the dream I`m dreaming,  
And I`ll be likewise part of your dream.*

*Betrayal and distortion it has seemed sometimes  
Are the only gifts experience will bring  
Yet what is a life lived without daring?  
Only a facsimile of living.  
This is a new beginning.  
I love you. I trust you.  
Come on in.*

**Cadbury Castle, Somerset  
6/11/99**

*p r e s e n c e*

*As  
Amidst  
A bluebell blaze  
Of hills,*

*Butterflies, heaven`s  
Erratic shrapnel, scribble  
Colour  
On air,*

*I become aware  
Of a presence  
Looking over my shoulder*

*Admiring its handiwork.*

# Sherborne Castle

*Who or what puts such care and attention  
Into getting the particular shading  
Just right of each gentle wavelet  
Arising, moving, fading,  
Followed in succession  
By another and another  
Sky-reinterpreting  
Sister or brother?*

*With the stuck moon like a tennis ball  
Frozen above in mid flight  
Cloud-pale, caught out of context  
In daylight.*

*I found rare peace here years ago  
Amid the falling roar of water,  
In these quieter years still rare  
Peace again is to be found here.*

*The lake`s tremblingly teeming forms  
Are lovingly stroked by the wind`s hand.*

*Swifts, the air`s crazy anchors,  
Squeal in purchase on air.*

*Listen to the light cascading-*

## *Patson Hill*

*Kite drawing lazy ochre spirals on the air,  
Birdsong, branch-creak, leaf-ocean-whisper,  
A symphony unfolding  
On the score of this rare still morning.  
After rainy months this visionary reward-  
A jewel-bright world.  
Mother-of-God robed sky`s  
Immaculate hot blue,  
Cloudless, the colour of perfection.  
The blaring, primary, primal hues  
Of Mother Earth, decked in fresh greens.  
Across a feather-field the wind racing itself,  
An invisible herd stampeding,  
On overwhelmed hills opposite  
A green bombardment,  
Life`s viridescent bombs stilly exploding.*

*The ancients had it right.  
Their cathedrals reared open to the sky`s tough-tender love,  
Wind and rain`s cleansing preventing  
The stale choking dust of centuries from accumulating;  
Their temples naked, lidless, harmonised,  
Earth underpinned, sustained, and cosmos-roofed.*

*Thinking I`ve escaped into another century,  
Sudden then comes the swift infection  
Of a roaring jet`s intrusion,  
To its tiny body out of all proportion,  
In a flash the scene`s silent sanctity dismantling-  
Across this flawless canvas a strident, shrieking slash,  
A job`s stone lobbed through this precious world of stained glass.*

Patson Hill, Dorset,  
18/6/2000

## *Hambleton Hill*

Up the processional way, guarded by ecstatic maenads swaying  
We trace dog-dirt wary steps, climb green toward blue  
For a mummary-less private ritual  
To other eyes impenetrable  
Involving as it does not doing, but being.

Perched on this promontory, spines earth-caressed,  
Cloud after cloud swim up to us, float past  
Mutating silently, friendly, curious.  
The book I'd brought stays shut in the face of this  
Wind-flicked sky-album, inexhaustible,  
Inexplicable, page after page.

At the frequencies that we perceive,  
Back-combed, windspun, multi-levelled  
Vapour palaces, separate translucent walls and floors,  
Are viewed with leisured ease,  
Yet are surely unperceived by the hill's lazy gaze  
As to us are angels.

Breeze sings earth greeting,  
A shimmering song through grass and campion, blowing  
Harebells inside out, mauve storm-caught umbrellas.  
The heathaze on the plain a transparent flag unfurling,  
The sparkling couched landscape, green and white fields  
alternating,  
Dances through drunk cellophane.

The fake man-made moon  
Of a fat white spherical balloon  
Hangs among horizon hills  
By blue distance islanded.

31/7/2000  
Hambleton Hill, Dorset



# The Firth Of Forth

## *I*

Assembled to mourn the sun  
Coffined at the opposite horizon,  
Clouds hold a flaming wake  
With playful pinks and yellows fake  
A painted sunset in the east,  
Stage scenery through which now bursts  
The moon to deliver her silvery speech,  
Such a theatrical entrance! Each  
Of us then leaves with our own  
Impressions and feelings, differing  
From each others, of the evening,  
As if we had witnessed six separate things  
Rather than the one shared scene.

*Earlsferry, Fife  
12 August 2000*

## **II**

*The full moon is blazing outrageously  
Flooding the blueyblack vault of the night  
With disquiet...*

*A cloud-cloak hurries to rescue  
Her modesty from this awful nakedness,  
Still the glittering gossip of the waves,  
And this unbearable lustrous spumy splendour  
Bowdlerize.*

*Such is her passion though  
That through the inky robe  
She burns pale rainbows.*

*Earlsferry, Fife  
13 August 2000*

## **III**

Pierced by vision's  
Invisible spear,  
Stars boil and burn,  
Scribbling their  
Signatures on  
The blackness of eye,  
With sapphire light,  
Light of ruby,  
Beneath and before  
Juno's foaming milk  
Sky-cyclorama  
Whisped on blue silk.

*Earlsferry, Fife  
14 August 2000*

# Ruin.

*The wind here has teeth.  
Poor bunny,  
You've found that out too, haven't you?  
I'm sure it was no other predator than the wind  
That stripped you so utterly, picked you so clean,  
Left you a ruin.*

*Your pelvic bones stick out like scissor handles.*

*This coast is pitted with other, larger skeletons, concrete and stone,  
Fortifications for battles that never came,  
Debris left by eras retreating,  
Abandoned husks of impulses, needs, now forgotten,  
Flotsam of economic-social tides long fallen.*

*Like a shoal of fish, humanity,  
A dazzling glint as it changes course  
To follow another current.  
Our brightest moments but a shining memory  
In any observer present.*

*Despair-  
In the cosmic eye  
All this planet's history  
Is but the rise and fall  
Of a wave in the sea.*

*Rejoice-  
The rise and fall of one wave  
Holds all that is, that has been,  
That will be.*

# merman

Rocked to sleep on a rock  
In the lap, in the lap,  
in the lap, lap, lap  
Of The Mother.

As that cormorant is to me,  
So to another observer must I be,  
Seemingly an outcrop of this prominence  
Silhouetted against shifting sparkling luminosity,  
The wake of the sun's golden galleon,  
A path of light reaching across the pathless sea.

Patterns in the water,  
Patterns on the land,  
The sea writes its sinuous  
Signature on sand.  
Written in a flowing, cursive  
Multiple hand-  
The secret of all secrets,  
Could we but understand.

What matters?  
The waves matter.  
What's matter?  
The sonic/visual billion tongued  
Language they speak, they are.  
Sea, palpable, manifest  
Mother of language, of all.  
Shall I throw these pages  
To dissolve back into you?

Shall I throw myself?

My salty blood is yelping recognition.

Not yet.

When like a hermit crab I leave  
This fleshy shell, this bony cell,  
I'd as lief it were left not to be  
Despoilation's spoil.  
I've grown attached to it. I'd hate to see  
Eyeballs, testicles, brain turn rancid putty.  
Leave me no prize of decay,  
Burn me, and scatter my ashes  
In the sea.

Profundity, the sea's  
Everyday currency.  
As its presence assuages me  
It also will admit no mind-chatter  
Trivial, unworthy.  
I find I've been sitting on a living entity,  
A city of barnacles, a mussel colony,  
Each citizen a tiny testament to life's tenacity.

I'm persuaded by the deep morning's solitude,  
Its lonelinesslessness,  
That all our undoing shall itself be undone  
Of life's gossamer-strong, tough-fragile web.

We've made such a terrible mess-  
Who better to fix it than us?  
Is that not surely now our highest purpose?

Elie Ness, Fife  
16/8/2000

# Lake

A faithless mirror.  
It stretches and stirs, stipples and blurs  
Clouds, trees and hills,  
Plays with the world,  
Dis- and re- integrating as it thinks fit,  
While sinuous cedar shadows race across lawns  
Down to its lip.  
On the wind's whim,  
Turns silver shield, repulsing reflection.

Now, points of slow light, dripping sparks  
From the sun's lazy firework,  
Unfold like a motet  
As a heron rows his way across the air,  
And, shaking off jewels in their wake,  
In single file glide twenty seven geese,  
While, in the declining sun,  
Gnats dance while they can.

The lake is a mind.

The mind is a lake.

## *Off The Rails.*

*Both moon and sun are in the sky,  
The rain-washed air is clear,  
And from this vantage point up high  
I can see for years.*

*These hills have basked thus in the sun  
That life on earth sustains  
Millennia—by random chance,  
Or so the disconnected claim,*

*In their disconnection  
Speaking only words of pain,  
Thinking only painful thoughts,  
Trapped like a train*

*On predetermined rails laid out  
That get from a) to b),  
But leave most of creation's wealth  
Impossible to see.*

*Get off the train, get out the car,  
Discard the roads and tracks,  
Discover the reality  
On which you've turned your back*

*Under your own power,  
And you'll re-meet your Self,  
Long lost, hidden all this time  
Along with so much else.*

*The hills so luminously green  
Shine as if they were a sun.  
The earth is lit up from within.  
All living creatures are my kin.*

# The Animation

Like a host of butterflies trembling in a grate  
The leaves on every tree, in exquisite immolation,  
Are as flames licking up the branches, dancing,  
I've stepped into a world of universal animation-

All that I see, like Aladdin's cave  
turned inside-out, this bright day glittering,  
Flaming swan's wake, blazing oak's leaf,  
dazzling crow's wing.

Grass stems and river-twinning cloudscapes flare  
As the sun is passed around for all things to share,  
The eye eats light and Mass is consecrated  
(This is my bodiless body,  
This my fleshless flesh)  
Masslessly.

In this vital equinoctial breeze all things subtly shouting  
'God is great'-how now can there be any doubting  
With everything singing in jubilation  
Thus *creating* creation?

Port Meadow, Oxford  
28/9/2000



# A Clear Path

The fields are steaming underneath the sun  
Which climbs in trackless blue behind the moon,  
The web is hung with condensation's beads;  
The plutocrat of light seems to have flung  
His wealth so wide that every brown sod,  
Gold leaf, and green grass-stem bathes in his rays  
Translucent, though my shadow stretches long.

The illuminated manuscript days  
Of October are the apex of the year.  
The low sun saturates the world with light,  
A world internally catching on fire  
While poised a spell at equilibrium,  
The still air Time itself catching its breath.  
This heat and light like mist disperse my fears,  
With nothing to my name, the world is mine,  
The path lies clear ahead that leads me on,  
In this sacralising light, I see it shine.

Sherborne Park, Dorset  
19/10/2000

# Giving Tongue

And Salisbury is a light accumulator  
Of marvellously massless stone,  
Aspirant,  
An unfeasibility of winged rock  
Cunningly charmed into an enticement  
Through which light's dolphins leap and swim and play.

How right that we say bells have tongues,  
That they, as on this erotic-dreamy morning,  
Sing, speak, laugh, admonish  
In sonic golden fire.  
How broken in thought are we  
From communion so often,  
And the angel-voiced bells give loving tongue  
That we pay attention.

Why this fire-gold morning?  
Why isn't there Nothing?  
Who has reared over the Void  
This painful/beautiful, ever wondrous Something?  
It is the Author of our Being.  
With the bells His praises we sing

As my lingam moves in you, a priest at an altar  
Giving his offering-  
The seed syllable,  
And like bells ourselves we ring.

Salisbury Cathedral, Wiltshire  
Sherborne, Dorset  
21-22/10/2000

# *'Everything Is Broken Up, And Dances.'*

*'Everything is broken up, and dances.'*-Jim Morrison, *An American Prayer*.

*Occasionally we see  
Everything as it is-  
Trembling slightly, oscillating.  
On this winter sunset hill, embraced  
By massless cloud masses of unfeasible  
Harmonious/disordered splendour  
(One brushstroke of a High Intelligence),  
The vibrational nature of the universe becomes apparent.  
Some optical crepuscular conjunction reveals  
The whirling world is all fiery grains,  
Animated, whorled.*

*Like beings in a dream of mud and treacle,  
From the gravity-defying ballerina who takes her own  
life,  
To the faithless shepherd, lying to the end,  
We stumble amid such luminosities,  
Exploiting what we feel we understand,  
(That which we don't understand, we rend,)  
Forgetting we are points of light, light dimensionless,  
We begin, rather than end, when we leave matter-realms  
behind,*

*Moving from the tangibly, visibly grand  
To a grandeur beyond anything we might now  
comprehend.*

## *Chesil Beach.*

If every moment of ones life were a pebble, perfect,  
how innumerably huge would be the shore,  
beside the Sea of Time, that they would occupy.

That is what this beach is.

A shelving wealth, weighed, valued, sorted,  
Laid at the skirts of the land  
By its besotted sea-lover.

These brine-glossed jewels, wet with light,  
Unique, each one, intricate,  
The child and the poet's delight,  
By mankind otherwise disregarded.

We've sunk our faith elsewhere,  
And in vaults far away lurk the gold bars  
Through which we vainly strive to glimpse the sky.

Not immune, I hoard a handful of treasures,  
Consign them to a dull dry death at home.

29/12/2000  
Chesil Beach, Dorset

## The Temple

Trees stripped of summer's verbiage  
Reveal their gestural language,  
Each branch with its still/silent song-dance  
Culminates in a perfect *mudra*.

Huge trunk, fallen, sprawling,  
A network of urgent direction-  
Not trunk, even, but massive limb only,  
Wrenched off in some gargantuan contest,  
From this still towering giant.

What shock/freak/  
Splinter /shriek/  
Waves of sound

Must have rent this temenos then,  
To leave these two stark stumps clear sap-weeping?

What oak-god agony must have  
Startled the deer from their sleeping  
That night of druid-haunted roaring,  
Perhaps even the dreams of us  
Shrink-wrapped dead men below, ruffling?  
(We who have decimated the Earth  
To avoid ever having to feel anything.)

And what of this old campaigner, twisted, split,  
Still living,  
Its fallen branches back into earth slinking,  
More like roots that cling,  
Mossy, dragon-scaled, serpentine?  
Hymn to the life's blind persistence  
In the face of all that Time can fling.

Its root-system's aquajade stratified writhing,  
Lichengreen torrent of whorls and eddies

cas  
(cas  
cade)  
ading.

Nature, master recycler of forms,  
Liquid into wood translating.

Winter denuded wood  
Gold-gilded by day's departure.  
A hill-top temple, its columns immense,  
Their arms spread in light-ravenous rapture.  
Each form unique, there are no repeats  
In Nature's means of manufacture.

Jerusalem, Sherborne Park  
14/1-19/2/2001

# *Thanksgiving*

Old honeystone, just right  
For light  
To lean a friendly arm on.  
Spring seems only a wingbeat away.  
Clodsea's brown billows about me,  
Flint-foam spumed.  
Lozenges of light gilding the hills' heraldry-  
God must be that to which we,  
In moments like this, instinctively  
Turn to say 'thank 'ee',  
For this bounteous lay unfolding about me,  
For this bountiful day being sung around me,  
For this web of light being spun about me.

19/2/2001  
Sherborne Park

# Shore

Shore:

battlefield strewn with all the debris  
of the endlessly unending war between  
permanence/im  
permanence.

Last night I dreamt of huge halls full of empty art,  
thronged.

Now on this unpeopled strand  
every glance flings eyewards a deft Monet,  
with circle pocked pink rocks emerald algae glazed,  
and planet pebbles, striped-jersey Jupiters, whirly worlds  
you hold in your hand, works which have been moving  
towards perfection,  
over all Time,

like this moment.

Lyme Regis, Dorset  
11/3/2001



# Maestro

## **The cut gem of an insect's wing-**

Light sparkling on the ridges of my fingers as if dancing  
on waves-

And is that a bank of sand crossing the sky or a bank of  
cloud stranded by the sea?

*Masterful Nature, jamming with inexhaustible  
invention, on any theme.*

And what of us, with our childish mimicry?  
We see the circling minuets of space and must play too,  
Invent solar systems and strap them to our wrists,  
Nick every idea we see and claim the credit ourselves.

That gaggle of daffodils, huddled against the wind,  
The strewn profusion of flowers and blossom amidst the  
green luxuriance of grass,  
The cedar's imposing grandeur, its far-flung brawny  
limbs,  
Steeple trunk, massive flukes in the wind thrashing...

What can my prayer be this resurrection day?  
Certainly not one of supplication, more  
Overwhelmed admiration.  
What can I say but, Maestro, bravo! Bravo!

# Sandford Orcas Road

*The emerald knoll  
Dew-diamond studded, a-sparkle—  
Air-current surfing buzzards wheel—  
The strutting pheasant, a living jewel—  
And, drying new wings on a daffodil,  
Motionless, the first tortoiseshell.*

*Now bubbling down like a mountain rill  
The song of the lark invisible,  
As if the smiling blue sky itself  
Were extemporising a canticle.*

16/4/2001  
Sandford Orcas Road, Dorset

## Light's Golden Doubloons.

Light's golden doubloons  
are strewn with lustrous abandon  
about the woodland floor.

Puddles of brightness  
revealing a world all-ablaze  
beyond this canopied cloister.

Random-deliberate  
splashes variegated deep green gloom  
so it charms all the more.

Unmistakably at work  
the eye of The Artist, so keen,  
the hand so assured.

Giant Hill Wood  
Cerne Abbas, Dorset  
1/7/2001

## St Catherine's Well

Beeches raise in silent praise  
a solemn-columned roof  
above the still pool  
tiny water creature peopled  
leaf and branch detritus filled—  
yet not defiled.

Down through staggered leaves  
drops of light pour through  
with the same unhurried grace  
as sparks of falling light  
from firework displays.

St. Catherine's Well  
Cerne Abbas, Dorset  
1/7/2001

## *Jerusalem*

*Leaf-refracted light shimmer,  
Living shade marbling, plays  
Over the lichen stippled trunk  
Of the beech's buttressed column.  
Summer ranks of bracken wall  
The temenos, leave a clearing  
In spontaneous reverence for  
The tree-gods' tenting canopies.*

*Severed stump's root system, flourishes of the Tao,  
Frozen flows of form, like storms  
On Jupiter.  
Rearing from the earth in awesome  
Wind-sculpted, moss and lichen tinted beauty,  
Triumphing over the chainsaw blade.*

*In another trunk, a lover's pledge,  
Carved in 1923.  
Are A.G. and M.H.R. still here  
To drink in the silvery, lake-reflected light  
As is the tree they vandalised with their devotion?*

*So British a fire-mackerel dusk sky,  
An ever widening embrace  
Of pink-tinged cloud arms  
Spread wide on either side  
Of a clear bluey cleft.  
The sun meanwhile enclosed  
In a grey shopping bag, leaking yolky broken egg light.*

*I am briefly held in the magical regard  
Of a doe and fawn.  
The doe breaks into a run  
And the fawn follows, springing marvellously on all four legs,  
Flouting gravity in pure exuberance of being-  
With it leaps my heart.*

## South Petherton

I can feel the trees growing over me,  
Feel my limbs rooting down  
Into corpse-composted earth.  
In physical terms, this is my future,  
In elemental terms, this is my destiny.  
Once the playbricks of consciousness have been discarded  
Here they will lie.  
You'll find me  
In the pine needle,  
The pigeon's red eye.  
You'll feel me  
In the soft breeze,  
This mid-day heat.

St.Peter and St. Paul's Churchyard  
South Petherton  
Somerset  
14/8/01

## an embrace of water

What else in the world is glad as this  
Clear river's running  
*The sea to meet?*

Incoming bridal white  
Waves run in  
Their lover to greet.

Who can make a demarcation,  
Unambiguously say, it's salt  
This side of the line  
And the other side sweet?

All that one can say is that there is an embrace  
Of water.

**Otter Estuary  
Budleigh Salterton  
Devon  
18/8/01**

## In This Woodland's Still Cathedral.

In this woodland's still cathedral  
Prayers of light slant down,  
And a moving wind  
Stirs the leafy congregation.

Here a refuge has been reared,  
Roofed and beamed by beech and oak,  
From the anguish of the jets  
With which the blue sky cries.

Through the leafy stained-glass-windows  
The sun is pouring down,  
A thousand fragile webs  
Above the woodland floor,  
Among the ferns still green,  
Delineating.

Pulses of light shimmering  
Appear to run along them,  
As if they were power lines  
Ferrying throbs of energy.

Though with discarded gold and ruby,  
Light-kissed, the cathedral pavement's  
Strewn,  
The canopy's still green,  
And what I took to be a wind-borne leaf  
Passing my face, proves butterfly.

Prayers of light slant down  
In this woodland's still cathedral.  
Will we and all that hangs on our stupidity  
Be granted absolution?



## Lyme Beach

### I

The sun, nearing the sea,  
Swells.  
Its cusp expands into a line.  
It becomes a red plastic plate  
On a red plastic stand.  
As the sea sucks it up  
It turns into a series of slats, which,  
If they were made of paper, paper that glowed,  
We would say were a crude representation  
Of this phenomenon.  
The slats wobble, and the waves  
At the horizon being swallowed by the wide red mouth  
Behave strangely,  
Look like ragged blue teeth chattering.

The last slat whisps  
Into nothing.

What's most remarkable about all this  
Is that no-one seems to think it remarkable.

8/12/01

## II

Try drawing the shapes of the sea  
With words.

Animated, adumbrated, gelatinous bark,  
Seething seathing—

A million shapes enfolded within  
A million shapes—

Multiplicity momentarily manifesting multiplicity—

No, none of this  
Will do.

Man might leave this Earth and never have taken the time  
To solve the riddle of the waves.

If some far descendent of ours  
On some sealess world were to consult  
The files and not find out the answer to the question  
'What was a wave?'—

What would we have achieved?

## Wonderful

They say the pavements of heaven are golden—but this is better.  
The ground is made from emerald filaments, myriad textures woven  
Into a carpet, while the daffodil light  
Laughs across the hills through branches not yet leaf encumbered  
And far view deleting.  
Even the sucking mud bears fascinating tracks  
Of some sort of water-fowl.  
Whether looking down, up, or around,  
What meets the eye is wonder-full.

14/2/02  
Hillfield Hill  
Dorset

## April's Stolen A March On Me

April's stolen a march on me—  
Does it every year.  
Last glance, the branches were bare:  
Now it seems as if overnight  
Tons of green bunting have been put out  
To herald Beltane's momentous approach.  
The trees in the wind bleed delicately  
Their varied degrees of rosiness.

Chaffinch and panicky rabbit,  
Blackbird and wind-ruffled water,  
Green leaves and fast-flying heron—  
All brightness, all clarity.

I don't need to fix my gaze  
On any one thing,  
That's impoverished thinking,  
Paucity of vision.  
I don't need blinkers to gain entry  
Into heaven. I say—I'm ready—  
Let it all pour in!

26/4/02  
Sherborne Lake