

*My Family
and
My Country*

Poems by WW Mitchell

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Song of Australia

*We love this land
Australians share together.
Our hearts belong.
The land and we are one.*

*From shore to shore
Australians stand together.
One hundred nations
In this land are one.*

*From age to age
Australians build together.
The future calls.
We answer one by one:*

*We love this land
Australians share together.
Our hearts belong.
The land and we are one.*

December 17, 1981.

Eyes Right

I do not care for "left" or "right",
But call me out and I will fight
To end a wrong, to put things Right!

No matter what some people say,
I don't go in for shades of grey,
From right or wrong you choose your way.

It's wrong to pull our land apart
On grounds of race. I'd rather start
By building bonds from heart to heart.

It's wrong to generate such hate
Where work is done. It's not too late
To build up teamwork, mate to mate.

It's wrong to get your way by force,
Whatever viewpoint you endorse,
Persuasion is the proper course.

It's right to have respect for law,
Defence of freedom's what it's for,
Destroy it and you're free no more.

To love our land is right by me -
To serve it well, with loyalty,
And fight to keep its people free.

*I wrote this piece on July 18, 1980 because I felt an urge to say
what I really meant - to get to the heart of things and make statements.
It was used by the RSL a few times.*

Freedom's Flame

Let us pay homage now to freedom's dead.
Tortured and torn in tyrant devastation -
Their spirits did not yield. By freedom led,
They still live on - a living inspiration.

Let us remember also freedom's slaves.
Held behind tyrant gates, they crave the key.
They hear the dead cry out from freedom's graves.
They burn to break their bonds and join the free.

Let us be one with them - and one another.
Let's be as true in life as they in death.
Are we not freedom's sister, freedom's brother?
Let us thank God that we breathe freedom's breath.

But let us be alert for scent of danger.
Tyranny is not a distant threat.
Friendly freedom could become a stranger.
This is a warning, friends - lest we forget.

Let us together, then, declare a vow:
To keep the flame of freedom burning bright,
And keep the faith as captives call us now
To nurture freedom's flame through freedom's night.

We have from them a sacred trust, my friends:
To carry freedom back to where they stand.
This sacred duty grows. It never ends
Till freedom's torch burns bright in every land.

*This was composed for World Freedom Day as a
renewal of the call to all who are fighting for
freedom to feel their part and to be inspired to
continue the fight. It is a challenge from the
leader to new, unproved followers.*

14th JANUARY 1983

The Code of Freedom

We believe freedom is the right of every human being,

We believe freedom is the only pathway to civilization,

We believe communism, fascism and all other totalitarian systems are enemies of freedom,

We believe all supporters or apologists of these systems are also enemies of freedom,

We believe growth of government is a totalitarian trend and similar threat to freedom,

We believe the basic purpose of government is to uphold and protect freedom, not subvert it,

We believe our own freedom and the freedom of the world is in jeopardy,

We believe in winning the support of all freedom loving people in every country,

We believe in waging an unending fight for freedom on all front-local, national, international,

We believe in fighting until victory is won.

This is the declaration of belief of the World Freedom League - taking a stand, and reflects my personal statement of belief in the right to freedom.

Bring out the Gold

There is no guilt except in mortal mind:
As legal guilt of criminals is man-made,
So moral guilt's imposed by humankind.
No God says moral ransom must be paid.

While guilt at law upholds good social order
And varies in response to social need,
The stain of guilt defiles all moral order
By saying "I accuse!" and not "I lead!"

The moral codes serve best as worthy goals,
Held high before mankind as guiding lights.
They give no lead when used as grim controls.
It's "Do!" not "Don't!" that calls us to the heights.
Change history's course. Reject the guilts of old.
In inspiration's fires bring out the Gold!

*Philosophical reflection, arising from a discussion with one of
Beverly's friends. There is nothing there except what is in
our own minds, December, 4 1983.*

For Peace in Freedom

How many born to freedom know the cost?
How many know that freedom is not free?
How many care if freedom's kept or lost?
To keep it - who is willing to pay the fee?
How many minds are sharp to freedom's danger?
How many hearts beat strong at freedom's call?
How many turn from freedom as a stranger
And cowardly close their eyes to freedom's fall?
These are the questions testing our tomorrows.
How we respond will shape the years to come.
Will we stand tall and strong mid strains and sorrows
And resolutely march to freedom's drum?
It is our task to check the tyrant's stride
And bring the world to peace on freedom's side.

*I wrote this when I was State President of the
World Freedom League. It is in a similar vein
to "Freedom's Flame".*

The 35th Hour

*On guard, my friends! Rise up and be on guard!
They're moving now to strike our country hard,
Armed with but a simple union card.*

*Remember how they struck in '74 -
The wage blown up by strikes from shore to shore
And unemployment multiplied by four?*

*Remember how we struggled to regain
A quarter million jobs destroyed? The pain
Was worst among the young. Yet once again -*

*They strike! This time to cut the working week
When cost efficiency we need and seek
To build up jobs - not make the future bleak.*

*Rise up, my friends! Rise up! Rise up at last!
Reject this bastard call, and do it fast.
We want to build a future, not a past.*

Written to declare personal contempt for the 35 hour week which was certain to destroy jobs on a large scale but was bulldozed in under ACTU/ALP and Communist led union pressure with the mindless approval of the Arbitration Commission. It was a blatant piece of industrial sabotage and is being revised under new workplace agreements based on economic sense, not destructive ideology

July 18, 1980.

Perth in the Morning

I see the city rising through the mist,
The buildings standing tall and straight and true
And all are glowing where they've just been kissed
By morning sun beneath a bowl of blue.

The sunlight slants across the urban sprawl
Where bus and car converge towards the heart,
Responding to the city's morning call,
Ready for an early morning start.

The mists are rising as they throng the streets.
The lifts are rising as the heights are filled.
With rising tempo now the great heart beats.
It strives afresh to have its hopes fulfilled.

It's here we bring together what we are
As from the earth we rise to reach our star.

*I dictated this onto my tape recorder while
driving into Perth on the morning of August 28,
1990. The city is an achievement and I see its
dynamism - this is the best way of looking at things
rather than grizzling.*

Search for Truth

*Philosophers engage in games with Percepts.
They conjure complex Concepts without Proof,
And then profoundly proffer Proof in Concepts.
(Who dares suggest Philosophy's a spoof?)*

*Observe them challenging Percept, the Perception -
Indulging in a dazzling game of Doubt -
Till all but Unreality's deception
And, step by step, Reality's counted out!*

*One wonders how the world of simple mortals
Keeps functioning when dealing in real terms,
Without the wit to pass through lofty portals
To higher Learning's wriggling tin of worms.
Perhaps the simple ones are not so dense.
Perhaps they find their way through common sense.*

Written at the same time as 'Bring Out the Gold', December 4, 1983.

The Numbat Plan

(to save our country)

"The time has come," the Numbat said, "to lead our country back
"To where it damn well out to be: We're off the ruddy track!"

"Good on yer, mate," the Numbats roared, "you've scored a hole in
one.

"This nation needs a Numbat now to get things bloody done!"

The Numbat leader glowed with pride, and once again he spoke:
I'm moved," he cried, "although I'm not a Sentimental Bloke....

"I'm moved to put before you now a concept brave and bold:
"That you and I and all of us should firmly now take hold -

"Should snatch the reins of leadership from faltering human hands,
"And show how progress can be made in all our far-flung lands."

All sound was hushed, no whisker moved among the Numbat clan
As Numbat Number One revealed his thrilling Numbat Plan.

Said Numbat One: "My first decree for better order will
"Cut off all radio contact with that Canberra vaudeville.

"And cut off all the newsmen, viewsmen - scribblers one and all -
"Till Canberra, sealed in silence, learns to heed the nation's call.

"For only in such silence and such lack of all pretence
"Can our Aussie brains recover and start thinking Aussie sense.

"Even then, the Aussie Ocker's got some grade one things to learn.
"The way they treat each other sometimes makes you bloody burn

"So on we go - my next decree will launch our master plan
"To teach our Aussies how to live just like a Numbat Clan.

"I'll save the sinking dollar with a simple little ruse:
"I'll ban it altogether - for it's got so little use.

"A masterstroke, my comrades! It's the answer Aussies crave.
"With no more money worries they won't have to scrimp and save.

"They'll have no budget deficit - budget, friends, at all.
"They'll neither have their taxes - nor a retrospective call!

"And then there's unemployment, friends - a dire and dread disease.
"The Numbat Plan will end it all - and with the greatest ease.

"In fact, my plan can liberate the struggling human race.
"Employment disappears and then the problem's put to rout.

"But not only unemployment, friends: this also cuts out strikes.
"No jobs and no more money, friends, means no more wages hikes!

"We'll need no arbitration - no more unions, union dues.

"Nor laws to sort the mess out - no more bubbles, no more blues.

"Now I take you to the next step of this numbing Numbat Plan:

"In one bold stroke - eliminate a major scourge of man.

"The scourge, my friends? - The car that causes car-nage on our roads.

"With work and money gone we'll all stay hoje in our abodes.

"So the car will be abandoned with the truck and train and plane.

"And the sweetly scented silence will come back to us again!

"But still, my friends, the Plan goes on - and silence points the way:

"There'll be no media now, my friends, to taint the silent day!

"And on and on it goes, my friends - so simple and so sure.

"Just cut out cash and cut out work: it's peace for ever more!"

"Of course, there could be problems on the home front, friends - and yet

"Togetherness has advantages - love games need no net."

The Numbats drew together as their leader spoke these words,
And though he rambled on and on - 'twas strictly for the birds.

And it seems to me that Numbats are like people after all.

The only voice they'll answer, friends, is Mother Nature's call.

They say they'll do things for the best. That's strictly for the elves.
When they're super sanctimonious - they're doing it for themselves!

So if you choose to lead them - mimic Mother Nature's choice:
Offer what they want to do and say it's freedom's choice.

And if they're wrong, pick scapegoats, friends, and say: "It's them not
us".

And if they're right, just hold on tight - they'll think you're
marvellous.

But don't forget the Numbat Plan - it's simple as a song.
There's nothing bloody in it, mates - so Nothing can go wrong!

The Numbat Plan was issued on the authority of Numbat One.

Strictly Embargoed until Someday.

*As work has been abolished, please make after-work enquiries
to the verbal communications officer, W.W. Mitchell, somehow.*

*Written for a special dinner evening organised by an old friend and held in
a lovely old Reception home. Everyone went attired in old time ball gowns
and suits and I was asked to give the Numbat address.*

Phantasm

When mind is madness bent and fueled by fear,
Mythology is born. And in this waking, queer
Dimension - primal, animal and stark -
Chill visions loom and populate the dark.

In this dimension, uncontrolled emotions
Mimic Reason, so that mindless notions
Look like logic. Fear of phantoms takes
The shape of phantoms fearful - slithering snakes,
The glim of ghouls, the feel of fetid fingers.
Memory fills. The false experience lingers.

It mingles with those echoes of Creation
From protozoan ooze to cerebration -
Those fear-stained phantoms of the primal brain
Which lie in waiting, quick to snap the chain
Of Reason and run screaming through the mind,
Till intellect is dumb, perception blind,
And rigor grips the muscles. Any sign
Or sound then strums the tightened nerves like strings.
Imagination transforms simple things.

From such crude sources early man created
Ancient rites by which he expiated
All those perils of a phantom world
In which his fearsome self-made demons whirled
About him. Little wonder, when he found

Relief from fear on any piece of ground,
He called it sacred - thinking it a place
Where anti-demon spirits gave him grace.

New phantoms these, they were at first benign,
But later moulded man to cringe and whine,
To grovel, pleading. Hence the ancient rites,
The fearful reverence for sacred sites,
And bloody sacrifice. Hence also dominance
By some who saw the sham and rose to prominence
As spirit leaders, ruthlessly demanding
Spirit's dues. Soon they were commanding
Service, tithes and bounties from the rest -
Making the fearful run at their behest.

How easily today we still submit
To manufactured guilt and fear. The wit
To reach the moon, to gain degrees is stilled
By phantoms conjured back. With Reason chilled -
We cringe at unions claiming "sacred rights";
We shrink away from native "sacred sites";
We balk at growth on "econut" demand;
We treat each protest as a dread command
As phantom fear, a stir of primal guilt,
A terror of dead "spirits" makes us wilt.

Surely it's time we shook ourselves alive
And put our self-made ghosts away - to strive
For futures free of ectoplasmic screams.
Let's fill our minds, instead, with visions, dreams

Of ventures, prospects, plans to stir the soul -
For man is not himself without a goal
To draw him ever forward, make him reach
Beyond himself. O how the ages teach:
They show us questing man not only rose
To break the thrall of nature, arm his bows
With arrowbolts of Reason, reaching out
To tame the universe, to flout
The 'strains of fear. A new resource
He marshalled shrewdly from the very source
Of fear: Imagination, once the slave
Of shivering darkness, left it's quaking cave
To bond with Reason, turning the unknown
Into hypothesis to match the known,
Creating understanding far beyond
The reach of intellect alone. This bond
Became the special magic of mankind.

But be on guard. Perception can go blind
If fired Imagination breaks from Reason
And runs unreasoning to it's cave. A season
Of backwardness will surely sweep aside
The progress made. The road ahead, once wide,
Will narrow. And the bolting horse of fear,
When Black Imagination rides, will plunge and rear
And gallop from the light. So be on guard.
Preserve the vital bond.... Yes, hold on hard.
Don't let the phantoms rise. Reject their call.
Assert your will to rise. Reject the fall.
Don't let the mind be bent or fueled by hear.
Reject mythology and firmly steer
By what is known, what is perceived, and then
By what can be envisaged. Close the den
Of primal visions. Visualize instead
In step with Reason. Proudly look ahead,
By breaking primal links. No ancient ghost
Should stop you aiming for each winning post.

The spirit of Man's no Phantom. Fear no more.
Depose the ghosts and let your spirit soar!

*Written after Cynthia and her friends had been
to York in search of a ghost that reputedly
haunted the old hospital, August 3, 1980.*

To the Rhyming Poet

I like the sharp-edged intellect of Jezebel.
She turns her thoughts to words with flair and skill.
But, while respecting what she does so well,
Rhyme and Metre are my preference still.

For me the discipline of metred rhyme
Means sharpening the intellect to pen
Clear pictures that can transcend time,
Conveying meaning not just now - but then!

Bill Shakespeare, with Lambics, got it right.
His five-beat metre added thrill and thrall,
And when he wished to lock a scene up tight,
His closing rhyming couplet said it all.

You can't paint pictures just by splashing paint.
That's just pretending poetry - when it ain't!

*Feb 28, 1991: I wrote this in response to the pathetic
contributions to the "poetry page" in G-R-O-K the
Curtin University student magazine.*

Thought for the Day.

Today's the day for you to be reflective
On life and friends and goals so warmly won.
It's not the day for being retrospective
About the things you didn't and should have done.
Such maladjusted memory makes reflection
A deviant devil damaging to thought,
Destructive of all sense of real direction.
That halts momentum, bringing plans to nought.
So here's to you, a new life just begun -
With new horizons reaching to the rim,
Your new potential dawning like the sun
And each day full of challenge to the brim
Your task today, as ever: Save our souls
From retrospective ruin with marvelous goals.

*Written for Sir Charles Court's birthday with a play
on the retrospective tax issue, September 129, 982.*

Quest

I search in vain today for verse that stirs -
It's racing rhythm thundering in the blood,
It's meaning sharp and clear, it's thoughts like spurs,
It's impact like an all-engulfing flood.
Why is it, now, with lost virility,
Pretending poets use translucent paint
To smear their tributes to sterility
In wishy washy words and meanings faint?
Is this an early warning we're decaying -
With poet's thoughts gone stale, like foetid breath,
With poet's style, a want of will betraying,
And poet's words so like the stink of death?
Or is the fault in journal after journal
Preferring trendy death to life eternal?

October 13, 1987.

Eternal Question

*Where is it now - a love that's ever true?
Lost in the strident stains of Women's Lib?
Lost in the lust of macho dreams? What clue
Can lead the searching heart to Adam's rib
And Eve's full-ribbed response - without the snare
Of serpent's reason, tempting woman's man
And man's good woman into lack of care
For true heart's feeling? Can we make a plan-
Restore old ways to capture love again
That goes beyond the taking to the giving?
And if we can - why not? It's surely plain:
True love imparts to life a richer living.
Where is it now - a love that's ever true?
True love can still be found in me and you!*

November 11th, 1980.

In the Quietness

*In the quietness of the heart,
In a silent place, apart,
The still small voice of God is heard:
The inner meaning of the Word.*

*And 20,000 hearts can hear,
Can know the Word is very near,
Can feel it most when all are still,
Hearing one voice express the Will*

*The Will of God that, day by day,
Each turns to Him to find the Way,
And adds one plus to daily living:
The listening heart's unstinted giving.*

*This was written on the night before the
"Centenary Celebration" at Perry Lakes of the
Anglican Church of WA and was presented to
Archbishop Sambol on the morning of the
celebration.*

The Educationalist

*Behold his noble brow,
He takes a noble vow:
To cram young craniums with what and how.*

*No matter how they balk,
He fills them up with chalk,
He makes them listen, stills their talk.*

*They dare not nod or blink,
He forces them to think,
Twixt them and knowledge he's the link.*

*Dispensing education,
He oft needs medication
As students test his dedication.*

*Yet, selflessly he strives
While sense and madness drives
This sinner-saint to build young lives.*

*This was a slightly light hearted, but respectful
tribute. It was a bit of fun and light exchange with
some of Russell's teaching friends.*

The Gift of Speech

*Somewhere out of sight, elusive mind
Designs the thoughts the tongue will hope to find.
How free they flow when, tongueless, in the brain
Ideas spring up like seedlings after rain.
And some, like flowers of multicoloured hue,
Weave brilliant patterns threading through and through
The glowing fabric of creative thought.
But how, upon the tongue, can they be caught --
Especially if your wild but wilting gaze,
Bedazzled by the footlights' brilliant blaze,
Transmits confusion to the teeming brain
With pangs of panic that derail the train
Of thought so carefully linked in line?
Whatever happens, you must give no sign
That thought has gone while, in an empty skull,
The tongue lies limp, the staring eyes are dull.*

*Now comes the time to use the Rostrum way:
Switch tongue to automatic, have your say
Through reflex action, carefully groomed and schooled.
Roll out the sonorous sounds: you'll have them fooled.
They'll think you're thinking - yeas, it's quite a trick
To fill such mental gaps till thoughts come thick*

And fast upon the flaccid flailing tongue
To bring relief. You climb back rung by rung -
Back from confusion, tingling with relief.
The danger now is: how can you be brief
When uoy of speech sweeps through your grateful soul?
This is the time the ear can play it's role
With feedback from the tongue to prompt the mind --
That listeners surely are of human kind
Deserving of you pity and concern.
Don't let the fires of creativity burn
Too bright, Too long, Too hot. Please throttle back.
Retain your balance. Run along the track
Of thinking planned before you rose to speak.
Round off the message firmly. Be not weak
Of will, beguiled by sound alone.
There is no message in a mindless drone.

So, having coped with panic, let's go back
To probe the mystery of the speaker's knack
Of putting tongue and brain in one straight line,
Conveying thoughts like ores, drawn from a mine,
Transmuted straight away into the words
That suit them best - to fly like birds....
Filling the air with movement from the start...
Moving from mind to mind, from heart to heart.

Surely the secret lies in really knowing
What you believe, and where you think you're going....
And knowing that - to summon wit and will
To face commitment. Dare to ask the still
Small voice of wisdom deep inside you
Who you really are. Let nought divide you.
Then face the world undaunted, knowing for sure
You can with growing confidence take the floor
Without that haunting gap twixt tongue and mind,
For all is one.... A unit defined
In selfless terms. By losing self,
And reaching for the world, down from the shelf
Your spirit leaps, and stretched out to reach
Where once it cinged. The gift of speech
Is yours from now, for ever. Heed the call.
You gain this precious gift by giving all.

*Written for a Speaker of the Year Award night at Rostrum
and later published in the Rostrum Journal.*

*The idea came to me after reading a copy of Quadrant and
feeling the bile rise in my stomach at the wishy-washy verse.*

Seeing and Believing

In search of meaning we pursue a wraith,
Seeking to give it shape by what we feel.
We draw its substance not from fact, but faith,
Till what we saw as wraith we see as real.

And for this faith-born being we seek a name,
We plough rich fields of faith. We scan each sod.
And everywhere we find the name's the same.
For people everywhere the name is God.

Good News

When News was born it filled the world with wonder.
It seemed that suddenly everything was known.
When editorials added verbal thunder
It seemed to come from that Almighty Throne.
But now the days of innocence have died
As we, through news, have grown quite undecided
Because, though News purveyors have multiplied,
Their "News" has shown them more and more divided:
* It's hard to know what's fact, and what's been added
* It's just as hard to know what's been subtracted.
* It's easier to spot a yarn than's padded.
* It's rare to see a raw untruth retracted.
So much is spent to tell us what seems new,
When what we want to know is what is true.

A journalist's lament, August 15, 1983

Dialogue with Tomorrow

Tomorrow asked me anxiously: "Explain
The meaning of Today so I may know
Myself." I sensed in him a poignant pain.
He knew that he would reap what I would sow.
In sharp embarrassment, I asked for time -
Wishing to consult with Yesterday.
I saw him, strained with hope, in upward climb -
His face so like my own, my early clay.
And in his earnest eyes I clearly saw
My mirror image, letting me compare
The man I was and am. With feelings raw,
I braced myself to face Tomorrow's stare.
He saw me, strained with hope, in upward climb -
As always, long on hope but short of time.

*Trying to express the striving life in the form of a Shakespearean type sonnet.
This was given at the end of an address to a P.R. Conference in Sydney.
Afterwards a delegate at the Conference from overseas asked for a copy as he
was very impressed. He later rang to say he had searched everywhere through
Shakespeare's works but had not found it.. November 15, 1980.*

Logic

Which one is true:

The logic of the intellect or the heart -

When each one seems to stand so far apart?

Which one is you:

The warmth of heart, the icy cold of reason -

When each one to the other can seem treason?

Each one is true:

The mind to reason and the heart to feeling -

The mind incisive as the heart is healing.

*Written to express an insight that came to me in the
middle of work 1984.*

The Prison of My Body

*I must speak about the prison of my body,
The aching weariness that brands each day
And makes what could be brilliant work so shoddy,
Then makes what could be life feel like decay.*

*How can this weary one with aching head
Express elusive thought in webs of gold
When weariness transmutes the gold to lead
And turns creation's heat to winter cold?*

*I wish there was a way to rise and soar
Outside the prison of my tortured flesh.
I wish - O how I wish that I could draw
One breath of mental air that's really fresh!
But wish aside, my outer self must hide
With smiles and cheerfulness the ruin inside.*

*Written as an outlet for my emotions in troubled times,
December 24, 1990.*

Those Tell-Tale Eyes

Those tell-tale eyes
Tell tales that can't be told
By tattle tongue:

With but a wink -
Midst pealing bells of gold,
A song is sung

With but a look -
A lingering look of old -
A heart is wrung

O tell-tale eyes
Gazing in mine - so bold
And ever-young.

*I had a urge to write something like Shakespeare -
with a little subtlety - August 6, 1980.*

Message for Writers

The trouble is, my friends, they think it's easy
To pen a verse or fill a page of prose.
They can't believe you can feel mighty queasy
With blank page terror. Just ask one who knows.
Creative thought may visit - who knows when?
But when he comes he brings a magic spark
And fills your fingers with a flying pen
To paint word pictures that can light the dark.
So - praise to writers for their toil and trouble.
They know that genuine genius floats in sweat,
And oft must do it's duty on the double.
They wonder, sometimes, why they do it. Yet -
There's not a calling like it on this earth.
Who else is busy daily giving birth?

*Written during the presentation of the Writer's
Award during W.A. Week at the Cottlesloe
Civic Centre. I was a member of the W.A.
Week Council, June 9, 1983.*

Those Bright Ideas

*Reflecting on my time with M & M
I find it hard today to say "Goodbye".
It's nice to feel you're part of "Us", not "Them",
Treading a treadmill full of "How?" and "Why?"*

*In six short years I've seen the evolution
Beyond pursuit of Knowledge to Understanding,
Exploring through analysis each solution
The ever-impatient market is demanding.*

*But still one frontier beckons. Each equation
Needs more than good analysis can reveal.
The answer's in the crucible of Creation,
Where ideas flow white hot like molten steel.
Let's teach our kids to find the bright ideas
And make us proud we gave them our best years.*

December, 3 1993

Contest

*To be or not to be? - Ah, what a question!
The knockers at the door all yearn to know.
For when the doors swing back, there's scant suggestion
From all those faces where their votes will go.
So candidates and faithful party backers
Must steel their wills and hoist their hopes up high,
For canvassing is not a job for slackers:
It's mandatory to try ... and try ... and try.
So dawns the day - you see the workers bracing
Their confidence as they man each polling booth.
The candidates, all smiles, their fates are facing
While in the boxes grows the final truth.
At last - the count so closely scrutineered.
And in at least one place they cheered and cheered.*

*This followed the experience of being a losing candidate
in the 1983 elections.*

Mass meeting

*They send the barkers out along the trails.
Determined men they are, as hard as nails.
They work to plan. The coverage is complete.
They get the sheep all branded nice and neat.*

*And then comes roundup. Out they go again.
This time they have to get them in the pen.
From far and wide they come. No slips allowed.
Each wayward one is shoved back in the crowd.*

*At last they're in - the poor bewildered mob.
The barkers watch them, satisfied with their job.
Their leader's lashing tongue subdues the din.
Says he: "This union meeting will begin".*

May 23, 1981.

Advance Austrikers!

*Come on you stalwart men --
Let's all knock off again:
Let's bludge on others for our pay.
None can resist our cause
Hang all the flamin' laws
Bully boys like us will have our way.*

*Picket your factory gate
Fill up your guts with hate
You've got a hold that can't be broke.
Howl down the gentle men
Who say they want to work again
A bludger's not a sentimental bloke.*

*Don't let's conciliate
Just let's retaliate
We've got the unions in our grip.
Members will sing our song
The law says they must belong
They can't give us the flamin' slip.*

*Our plan is very plain
No matter what the pain
We'll keep the workers going on strike.
We'll let the public yell
We'll tell 'em: "go to hell
"We're going to do just what we like."*

Dark Intellect

*A mindless force depraves the intellect
When Marxist reasoning replaces reason.
Thus do intellectuals defect -
By simply counting loyalty as treason.
Thus do Christians deviantly deny
Their Christ in deeds while serving with their lips.
Thus do the zealots proudly justify
The law of guns, the teaching touch of whips.
Thus do workers' leaders rule their lives
With talk of unity to bind their will.
Thus are people gulled by laws like knives.
Dissecting freedom till it's heart is still.
There is no feeling in this mindless force.
It feeds on power alone without remorse.*

Spectator Sportsman

*As one of 20,000 - who am I?
I'm one with them out there - the Cricket greats
Now locked in battle neath a sunny sky
As thousands more stream through the turnstile gates.
The bowler turns. I feel my muscles tense.
As though 'twas I out there who held the bat.
I sense aggression arguing with defence.
The bowler's thundering pace makes sure of that!
The ball comes flying down with bullet speed.
And I, the batsman, exit conscious mind
While hand and foot and eye to reflex heed,
And lightning bat sweeps down, the ball to find.
The willow strikes. The ball flies true and flat.
But mid-on streaks to reach it. God! Howzat?*

*After WACA pulled the first big crowd in the new stadium.
June 25, 1983.*

Spirit of Christmas

*Grownups thinking, searching, and selecting...
Busy buying, wrapping, naming, hiding...
Making sure small eyes won't be detecting
Signs of any tantalizing tiding.
Children being good as wild hope rises...
Not believing while they feign belief...
Hoping for the best of all surprises...
Knowing only Christmas brings relief.
Friends and families lavish with their greetings...
Sweethearts, lovers, freely taking part..
A richer warmth pervading all their meetings...
A deeper feeling bonding heart to heart.
Bringing people closer, full of cheer,
Christmas Day's the best day of the year.*

December 25, 1983.

Happy Dreams

When you're tucked up into bed with a hug, hug, hug,
And you snuggle down as snug as a bug in a rug,
And your eyelids are heavy so they close, close, close,
And you drift into dreamland as you doze, doze, doze

Down in dreamland, there are lots of things to see, see, see,
And lots of people you can hope to be, be, be.

You're the driver of a super special car, car, car.
You're the pilot of a rocket to a star, star, star.
There is absolutely nothing you can't do, do, do.
And there's not a person cleverer than you, you, you.

But when dreams are turned to nightmares are you scared, scared,
scared?

Do you duck beneath the blankets of the bed, bed, bed?

Well now -

Others may get frightened but you don't, don't, don't.
Others may feel scary but you won't, won't won't.
You're strong enough the whole darned world to save, save, save.
You're never scared because you are so brave, brave, brave.

So dream away - you're brave enough to dream, dream, dream.
But let your dreams go running like a stream, stream, stream.
And when you've finished dreaming through the night, night, night -
You'll wake up in the morning feeling bright, bright, bright.

So I wish you happy dreaming with a hug, hug, hug,
As you snuggle down as snug as a bug in a rug.

November 11, 1982

Soliloquy on 70

*To be not young and yet to be not old:
The young can't make this choice, and yet you can.
How they must long to have the prize you hold.
But only years can blend both boy and man.
How limiting the fledglings gifts of youth -
Untutored by the teaching tests of time.
How limitless your insights into truth -
Your vision keened by time and now sublime.
Pity the young, my friend. Be gentle, yet.
The generation gap is not their fault.
It's up to you, time distanced now, to let
The struggling young catch up. So call a halt
And pace yourself with them, slow though they be.
In this way old and young live happily.*

*Written for my friend Jeff Gordon for his 70th
Birthday, January 8, 1983.*

To a Son at 21

You move through time, unceasing in it's flow -
Time without land marks, eternally the same,
Caught in it's onward movement as you go,
You face the test of time: to play the game
Of life in timeless style. There should be no
Deflection of your purpose, nothing tame -
But, rather, reaping what you choose to sow,
Using the flow of time to fan the flame
Of sound ambition into a fiery glow
Which lights the years that you will choose to claim
As yours, Be, then, a beacon that will show
The way, and people will be glad you came
In their time - helping steer their history thro'
The mists of time. So dare to make the name
That lights the way and lets the ages know
A noble spirit in these ages came,
Outlived the body's span, refused to go -
A timeless, ageless entity became
A spirit knowing neither friend or foe,
But adding brightness to the spirit Flame

Of countless lives around the world. And so
We're feeling proud that you will bear our name
Beyond our time. Our lasting love will go
Wherever you may go, but makes no claim.

At 21, a man must choose the row
He'll hoe. So choose it well. Take steady aim.
Then give life all you've got, and you will grow
To fill your destiny and make your name.

To my son Russell on turning June 21, 1970

Joseph

I like his style. He loves to have a go.
His vital face lights up at things to do.
For him, the world is fresh, each day aglow.
He tackles every task as if it's new.
See how he loves, not just to run, but race.
Striving is the essence of his style.
See how he moves with unabated pace -
His love of striving real, and free of guile.
Watch him at play: he always has a goal.
The game not only gives him real delight -
He uses it to practice full control
As mind and sinew move to get things right.
At five, he's made his choice 'twixt "can't" and "can".
His young affirmative will make the man.

Joseph, age five., December 13, 1980

Benjamin

His dreams are on his face and in his eyes -
Big dreams that he, and only he, can capture.
No limit does he place upon their size
As long as they can fill his mind with rapture.
He boldly goes where no man went before.
He strides with giant steps across the scene.
There's nowhere that he does not dare explore.
His heart is big, his valiant vision keen
Small wonder, then, that such a mighty man -
While sharing laughter with his mind at rest -
Commits his mind the universe to span,
Searching the grand horizons of his quest.
Don't say: "He's only three" - and think him small:
Inside, there stands a man who's ten feet tall!

Ben, age three, December 13, 1980.

Ruth

I love her. And I know she loves me, too.
I tell her softly as she rests her head.
So sweetly on my shoulder: "I love you".
And I know she loves me, too, though nothing's said.
I watch her, quick of movement, bright of eye.
I see her pensive, dreaming into space.
I sense her forming questions, hear her sigh.
Then watch a dawning smile light up her face.
She loves me but she's waiting - not for me....
Waiting, and watching, too, for someone dear....
Someone she knows not yet - but one that she
Will know and love and want so very near.
She's one year old and yet, though life is new,
Her woman's heart's eternal, loving, true.

Ruth, age one, December 13, 1980

Drinking Gillie Tea

*Since we started drinking Gillie tea
(It must be nigh on thirty years ago),
Around the table or beneath a tree
That tea has been unceasing in it's flow.
And with it flows the friendship of true friends,
Willing to share the good times and the bad.
Theirs is a friendship true - that never ends.
Each cup recalls the friendship we have had.
So, on this sunny birthday, we present
Old Grand-dad Gillie with a tin of tea,
Well knowing now that Grandma will be sent
To make another friendship brew. You'll see!
So with this tin of tea we say "Three Cheers"
To sharing tea another thirty years!*

July 3, 1983.

Many Happy Returns....

*I, the ultimate guardian of time,
Have made assessment of your time-based debts;
And if you want an afterlife sublime,
Make sure you pay them or you'll have regrets.
So hear me now as I present my bill;
Your debt to me is clear: 100 years,
With only 40 paid and in the till.
You owe me 60, crowded with careers.
Take my advice: don't argue, don't evade.
Before too late, old chap - yes, be reflective
On what could be... So when your choice is made
You'll give yourself no cause for retrospective
Anguish when it's time to toll the bell.
If you're in debt, old man, you'll go to Hell!*

November 6, 1983.

Mother's Way

*Mums and Dads are Different, thank the Lord.
But the difference is in nature, not in caring.
And when the moment come to cut the cord
The outcome is a new life both are sharing.*

*But this is Mother's Day, and even cads
Are moist of eye as memory stirs emotion.
Where they withstand the anger of their Dads,
They're really quite undone by Mum's devotion.*

*For this is where the Mums and Dads will differ:
The Mothers answer to a softer call....
The Fathers' upper lip is always stiffer....
The Mothers love them when they rise or fall.
And so we celebrate a Mother's Way,
And wish all Mums a Happy Mother's Day.*

Mother's Day, May 14, 1989.

When You're 80 Matey

*When you're Eighty, Matey, and you love your Honey,
And you've learned to laugh at long life's tricks and treats,
Then it's never cloudy for your outlook's sunny
And the Bitter's more than balanced by your Sweets.*

*When you're Eighty, Matey, and retired from running,
But still you love a bit of Rock and Roll,
With skill and will and just a touch of cunning
You still do what you want to, bless your soul!*

*When you're Eighty, Matey, and still full of fight,
And fighting words are buzzing in your head,
Who do you target when they've seen the Light
And round the world, the love of Red is dead?*

*At Eighty, Matey, you should keep your eyes on
The ever-risin' and surprisin' New Horizon!*

Loving Birthday Greeting to Paul, July 6, 1991

The Girl who Baked the Cake

*A girl I used to know - she'd send me cake
When I was in New Guinea. And she's write
Warm letters for a lonely heart to make
Sweet dreams of - so the future seemed alright.*

*Though no one knew which day would be the last,
There was a bond between us none could sever.
And when, on leave, in church, the die was cast,
The thrall of time was gone. This was for ever.*

*Full forty years and eight - we've seen them go.
But time is not the measure of our days.
We've lived to see our loving children grow,
And a dozen cousins with their loving ways....
And loving friends. There's nothing more to get.
For the girl who baked the cake is with me yet!*

On Being a Father

*To be a Father, you must love a Mother -
Not just a girl, a woman or a wife.
And you must love her like you love no other,
And love her every day throughout your life.*

*To be a Father, you must set example -
Not just tell others what they ought to do,
Or simply offer gestures as a sample.
In everything you do you must be true.*

*To be a Father, you must learn to lead
When what to do requires a reason why,
When moral backbone is the basic need
And others know on you they can rely.*

*In very many ways it's Nature's plan:
To be a Father, you must be a Man!*

Father's Day, 1991.

Jumping Joseph

A jolly story I will tell
Of a jolly schoolboy I know well.

Jumping Joseph is his name
And jumping is his favourite game.

Jumps in the morning out of bed.
Jumps all day - that's what I said.

Asked to jump, he'll sure be in it.
Never wastes a jumping minute.

Jumping up and jumping down
Round the school and round the town.

Jumps the puddles, jumps the creek.
Jumps all day and jumps all week.

But while he's jumping he won't shirk.
He loves to do his share of work.

Jumping Joseph's always glad
To do a job to please his Dad.

And when the time for bed has come,
He jumps in bed to please his Mum.

Jumping Joseph jumps for joy.
He's a jolly jumping boy.

November 11, 1982.

A Toast to Jim

*We're gathered here because of Jim -
We didn't have to come but sim-
ply came because we're friends of Him:
A dashing lad well built and slim
Who, though he never goes to gym,
Still seems to keep himself in trim,
While studying with verve and vim
To push his knowledge to the rim
And save himself from being dim.*

So altogether now - Hooray - for Jim!