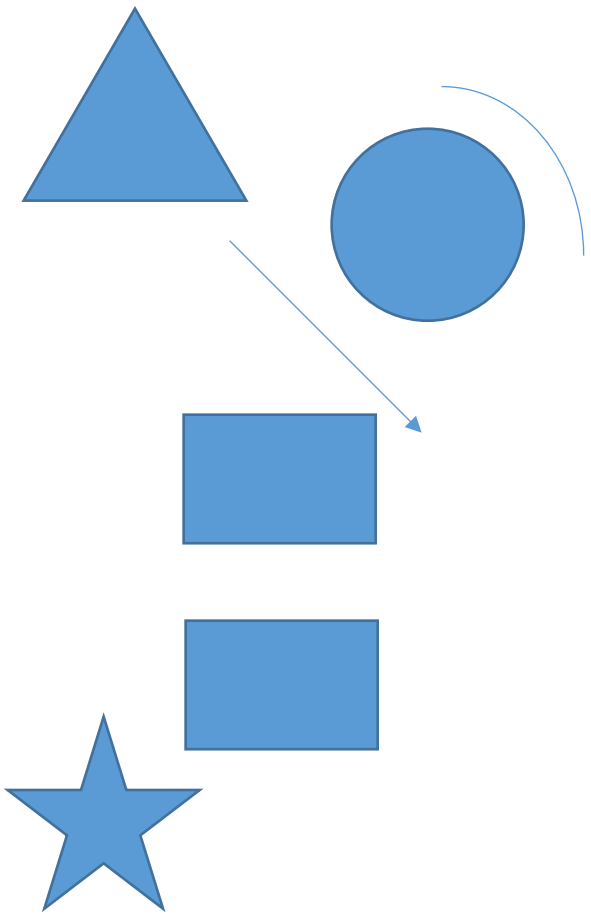
# *And the Rhymes that Little Children Say*



Paul Dupuis

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By

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For Brenda

Forward.

I began writing this book in 2020, and now I am confident that you, the reader, might find it decent food for thought. “And the Rhymes That Little Children Say” is composed of prose and poetry, and I am hoping that you might find the ramblings of a poetic misfit an easy and enjoyable read.

I will write about social democracy and the “pot” we all contribute to in one way or another. And we all take from the “pot” too. I share my life experience of being a poetic misfit, and I insist that all people should be valued, and treated as such. Christ teaches this to us, but many of us cannot listen.

I am not putting anyone down. We all have our scapegoats.

Let me share with you a few lines from this book that you are about to read:

“… But why does a man who struggles have any relationship to the pot we could all share? It’s about doing what one can to participate in life. It’s about doing your job even though it might not pay you any kind of monetary gain whatsoever… Reality is reasonable today. Reality isn’t perfect and it isn’t always comfortable. It is reality today and I can truly accept this joyous and torrid thing that we call life…

… I was a person who loved but didn’t know how to love. Friendships and romances that I cherished were ruined because of the disorder I live with. Life also has a way of jeopardizing relationships. I believe the Buddha said that life is suffering…”

We can all relate to something in this book. Its contents reach all of us in one way or another. We are all in this together. In humility I want you to know we all matter.

I will close this forward with a bit of a verse:

“I dropped my pen today

Such a plastic click

On a cold, cold kitchen floor…”

Chapter One

I am writing this book as a person who has said, “Throw it all in a pot!” Why? I say this because I believe in social democracy.

I don’t want to take away anything from anyone but, I do believe that there are better ways to share the wealth of this world. I say this because so many  people just aren’t getting a decent share, or what could be considered a decent share.

Many people will say that there just isn’t enough to go around the way in which we are raping this planet. I would have to say that as non-renewable resources are dwindling, and climate change is causing havoc with our environment, we have to have to put it all in one pot. At least if we learn to be reasonable, knowing that we are all in this together, we will enter a new starting point of society.

I would say that it is time to be reasonable and to aim to be reasonably happy and content. If you ask me how I would have to say that we already know.

What I have discovered in my life is that I have to have a bit of humility and I have to keep my wants reasonable. To be truthful, I have no choice. Life and lack of marketable ability have left me at the mercy of social programs and humble employment for my entire adult life.

I am a disabled adult. I receive a small disability pension from the federal government of Canada. I also work  as a casual cleaner and I pitch in around our home – you know cooking, cleaning, grocery shopping, and other errands.

My wife works full-time at a minimum wage job as a front desk clerk at a small motel. With our combined incomes we barely get by. She knew that I was disabled when we met, and she did not go into our marriage blind. We have the worries of what happens when something breaks down.

Money is tight.

You might be wondering what is my disability is. I live with a major mental illness (schizoaffective disorder). I do ok, but I struggle.

This is not the first book I have written. I am going to welcome you into a life of coping and being reasonable. I am going to share a story with you of realism and reasonability.

Many people have helped me to find a sense of inherent dignity and inherent self-worth. The old tapes play in my head and the cumbersome voice of depression can haunt me, but being reasonably happy, joyous, and free can exist in my humble lifestyle. The only reason that life is good for me is simply because I have found the gifts of desperation and gratitude.

I call it grace and I have paid dearly to receive this grace. When one understands grace, one knows grace is a God thing.

Much of my life ,I have been quiet, shy, and introverted. As a young boy I hung a bit with a few people from time to time, but I never really fit in. If there was trouble to be found, I was probably around.

I think I will stay away from any delinquency that I might have been involved in as I am going to try to share perhaps parts of my life that have become, for the lack of a better word, manageable. My life is a poem.

An old friend of mine used to say that I was innocently naïve. I was in my late twenties when she told me that. Today, some people think I am a bit dense. Intellectually that is. I don’t usually say much in my

defence. Some people call it good-natured fun but some times it is a bit insulting. It's human nature in some people. Maybe I lead them into it.

I am no saint, mind you. All people deserve to be treated with a sense of respect. A person learns this when they get older. Value the person you are and value other people. This is called loving people. You know, like Jesus said, "Love your neighbour and treat them like you would like to be treated."

Jesus also said, "Love your enemy." If disabled and marginalized people are your enemies, love us anyways. Guess I get a bit preachy at times. I will try and watch out for that. Most people are doing about the best that they can.

One of the things I do reasonably well is that I observe my feelings and the events of my life. I can reasonably observe the words and actions of other people and poetically record them without biased judgement. The poetic licence allows me to instill a bit of emotion in the reader.

I am reoffering the description of myself as an introvert. Support groups and writing have enabled me to speak in public. I used to do it with a bit of humour, but now I find myself being serious about the pains of mental illness.

I also know the damage of misusing alcohol and other substances, which I believe is an insidious disease. I haven't had alcohol or smoked pot in a long time. In much of my writings I identify as a recovering person. When I was getting wasted, I was very unreasonable.

I will share with you a poem that came to me as I sat by an open window at a café I frequent. When there, I sit with my decaf, a note book, and couple of gel pens in order that inspiration can have the chance to visit. More often than not, the muse shows up and poems begin.

This poem is titled "The Windowsill".

The noise it laughs in unison, a melancholic sit,

A poet sighs the years fly by, the clock ticks- tick tick tick,

He gazes through the window screen, the sky a simple grey

His pain is heavy, without words, such like the sad songs say

A gentle brush, his shaven head, a slight slight breeze unseen

It's mostly still at windowsill, his paper blank and clean

For the troubles of a brown bag buzz, insanity in price

A dollar-five for cheap, cheap wine, each drink is tasted twice

But now the days are days of love, the noise still lives a bit

The poet sighs and sometimes cries, the clock ticks - tick tick tick

With a decaf by the windowsill, the poet sits alone

To see a view so made of glass and wood and paint and stone

While memories of madness mock the minds of boys and men

With moments touching paradise, the memories of when

That cannabis could catch the sky, like comets crashing clear

A time a time of long ago, quite lost but still quite near

Thirty years or more have slept the silver birds have flown

The clock it simply ticks - tick tick, in glass and wood and stone

And silence is a butterfly, and love a soft embrace

And joy is but a simple smile that you don't have to chase

A speckled road from drops of wet, a view that you can hold

The summer's sweet surrendering that simply won't be sold

With decaf by the windowsill, a poet sits alone

To see a view so made of glass and wood and paint and stone

So now the days are days of love, the noise still lives a bit

The poet sighs and sometimes cries, the clock ticks - tick tick tick

With decaf by the windowsill, the poet sits alone

To see a view so made of glass and wood and paint and stone

As you can see the muse so comes when and where it does. The café I frequent is a place where I rarely feel the need to do anything other than work on a poem and sip my decaf. Other times I will review some of the writing I had already worked on. But why does a man who struggles have any relationship

to the pot we could all share? It's about doing what one can to participate in life. It's about doing your job even though it might not pay you any kind of monetary gain whatsoever. How does writing and sharing the poem "The Windowsill" benefit anyone?

Well, there is a story behind "The Windowsill". It conveys a message of the noise or the dialogue of being imperfect. It reveals how time passes by and continues to pass by in ticks tick - tick tick tick. It talks about the troubles of a brown bag buzz.

(If you wonder what a brown bag buzz refers to, it's about drinking cheap wine wrapped up in a brown paper bag.) If you wonder about the insanity of this is, it appears when we were young and drinking cheap wine, we became awfully drunk and at times would be completely out of control. Most of us didn't know any better.

Alcoholism and alcoholic behaviors are still rampant in much of today's society. I believe booze can twist the minds of boys and men. It has been a long time since I put down the booze and the pot. Fear started my drinking. Fear kept me drinking. Fear and regret ended my drinking. It was the same for pot too.

What seemed like a good thing to do became the beginning of the end. It became the end of personal freedom and masked reality for years.

Reality is reasonable today. Reality is not perfect and it isn't always comfortable. It is reality today and I can truly accept this joyous and torrid thing that we call life. Today I am free to love and to be loved in this imperfect beautiful world with the beautiful imperfect people that I know. I just have to remember that most people are truly doing the best they can. I hope I am one of them.

It is of no wonder to me as to why I started writing. In reality, I am not very well versed in conversation. I didn't, and still don't know how to really communicate with others on a speaking level. I can't sustain the energy level of other people when engaged in emotional topics. In addition to this, it is hard to carry on a conversation when you don't keep up on current events or your mind is often invaded with non-

related information because the conversation has triggered a different line of thought and it just comes out. One learns to avoid conversation when this happens because people just don't listen to you when it happens. It is no fun not being able to follow a conversation. It doesn't always happen, but it happens more often than not. It is probably difficult for both parties.

Not being able to pay attention causes difficulties in life but you adapt in other ways to try to make a connection with people.

When one lacks the ability to make connection, a real connection, one is transported to a world of alone. Alone can lead to feeling unwanted and/or fearful. Many people try to hide from this in different ways. We can turn to booze, pot, sex, or a variety of other things to make this connection. We feel the need to belong.

I found myself fitting in with the drunkards and the addicts. We were people who liked to party. People who liked to smoke dope. People who drank alcohol in excessive amounts. People who got wasted a bit too much. People who wanted to love but had no sense of responsibility.

I was a person who loved but didn't know how to love. Friendships and romances that I cherished were ruined because of the disorder that I live with. Life also has a way of jeopardizing relationships. I believe the Buddha said that life is suffering.

I believe many people hit bottoms or a low points in their lives. These points in our lives are often called breakdowns. Some people have awakenings of a spiritual nature because of what they have discovered after going through a breakdown.

In my case they opened the doors to recovery and awareness. And in this recovery, I have gained a sense of awareness and the gift of the humble, imperfect human heart.

The gift of recovery, imperfect recovery, has made me a little bit more aware as I live life one day at a time. I will now share with you a poem the I wrote. Remember the statement that I wrote earlier. My life is a poem.

Here is “The Gifts of Desperation and Gratitude”

Can the truth of desperation ever change a person’s heart

With the loss of childhood’s innocence when your soul is torn apart

In frustration of the daily climb born to fall and fall again

When you want to walk and hold the sky but you don’t know how or when

And you often saw the mountain peak for it appeared but ran away

While stars would dance as the clouds would pass while the moon would often say

That we are deaf to vague, vague words of love and hope and trust

And we would often hear those God damned words from dust to dust to dust

And our torn and tattered souls will bow as dust to dust begins

And a jester sort of cries a tear and a jester sort of grins

While our souls have found the mountain peaks as they walk and hold the sky

While a jester weeps a happy tear with a soft and grateful sigh

And betwixt our desperation is the greatest gift we've found

It's the silence when we're torn apart with a calming raging sound

And you know that you're a child of God from this deep and desperate start

When you feel the gift of gratitude and you have found the human heart

In the aloneness of my illness, I found the aloneness of disconnection. In the aloneness of my addictions I thought I had found love, but I found only aloneness. In my aloneness I found that I had lost myself and in desperation I had become a passive participant of the delusional narratives in my head. I lost every last bit of reality that existed in a sober mind. I had become non-human and existed only in the way of self, becoming depressed and heart broken with no will or desire to live or to be.

This is the pain of mental illness.

This also is the gift of desperation - and desperation is a gift. It led me into sobriety and imperfectly fair health.

Desperation is not weakness! When we surrender and throw up our hands and cry, "God help me!" When we know we can no longer fight an enemy that we cannot defeat on our own, and we ask for help, we are at one of our weakest and strongest moments that we will ever encounter.

We make that call to our doctor or a clergy person. When we check into a detox. When we call the help line, or we call that person we know who we know is in a 12 Step Fellowship. When we get admitted into the psychiatric Unit.

We will see what a gift desperation really is when the breakthrough happens and the healing begins. It took years for me to see that desperation is a gift and not just something to deny or forget.

I thought life was about arriving at some form of perpetual contentment, but I just can't seem to find it. I have found a rather wavey beam of contentment. I call it reasonable happiness.

In my life I have fallen hard, and I have lost my innocence. I have reached for the sky only to find that the sky had chosen to rain down on me. I have thought I would get to climb the mountain peak only to find that I was deaf to love and hope and trust. I thought that when I became perfect, I could fix all my mistakes - but now I know that I was born imperfect and I am going to die imperfect.

I now realize that life is often out of my hands and I would be foolish to think otherwise.

I now realize that life has torn me apart and the gift of desperation has shown to me that I am just one of the many, many children of God and also that I have a humble human heart that is simply imperfect.

And for this I am so grateful.

Be it the disorder I live with, or the medications that I take, it is important for me to write. Somewhat blunted emotions can leave a person disconnected from what is right in front of them. Emptiness, at times, can leave a person longing to feel. It can be downright uncomfortable, and the need to feel is often sought consuming alcohol or pot. It is what we do.

Sometimes being alone and uncomfortable leads us to a big bag of potato chips that we can wash down with a soft drink. Perhaps that extra piece of chocolate cake helps us to fill the void.

I find myself, at times, being what seems to be addicted to emotion. I know that I can be an emotional eater. I also know that I am an emotional writer, and I do so not wishing to stand alone in this world. I just want to be valued for what I have been practicing and honing for the last forty years of my life.

If you don't like what I do, I am cool with that. I have had plenty of rejection letters, but I have also had a bit of success. Although I have been published and even though I have made only a small amount of

financial  gain, I continue to write. I never really did it for the money, but today I believe it is a job I must do.

Marketing poetry and literature is something that is very difficult to do. If you don't know the buzz words most publishers are wary about your work. And even if you know the buzz words you have to have a break somewhere, somehow, and some way to make any money with it.

I would love to benefit financially from my work, but it simply isn't all about the money. Story telling, which quite often is done in the poetic form, is what I do best. I have been told that I have a gift, or that I am gifted, but in my opinion, it is simply what I do.

I have been described as a wordsmith. When I heard that I felt appreciated.

I have thrown as much as I can into the pot, and I continue to do so. Some people don't appreciate my contribution. No matter how hard you try it just isn't good enough for some people. Let me say this: I am enough.

Writing poetry is important to me. I see the world in little poetic stories. It is simply what I do best. For today, anyways.

Some would call it the poetic licence. Some would call it the poetic vessel inspired by emotion and thought. Some call it the muse. It's all the same. It is what it is.

I have called it the muse and continue, at times, to do so today. It doesn't always come when I want it to but I am learning that it is a part of me. I am hoping that I can use it for the benefit of others. I really don't think that I am saying anything that hasn't been said before.

Let me tell you about being a poet. It is simple; you write poetry.

This is a simple poem, in blank verse that came to me one day while I sat at my table. It started when I dropped my pen on the floor. It is called "And The Rhymes That Little Children Say".

I dropped my pen today

Such a plastic click

On a cold, cold kitchen floor

I recalled such empty times

a harsh and painful place

Clawing, grasping,

praying to be ransomed

from life and its unforgiving loneliness

Yet my pen was bold

to right my world

your world, our world

and the chaos on the evening news

Thus I reach and hold my pen

with the gathered paper I embrace

for love is kind - it is not pain.

And these gentle times are quite suffice

like a sunny day's soft whispered kiss

thus what I forge are words just words

for I will be and still I am

the lover's hope the soldier's peace

and the rhymes that little children say

I dropped my pen today

such a plastic click

on a cold, cold kitchen floor

As you can see, this is what the poets do. This is what poetry is. "The lover's hope the soldier's peace and the rhymes that little children say". Not everyone reads it. Not everyone likes it. And not everyone gets it.

This is me; this is a person. It is a part of my story. My life is a poem.

Chapter Two

Putting it all in a pot is, or would be, a generous thing for many people to do. Some people's skills market well in today's world and often they choose to ignore greed. They put much of their fruit of their ability into helping the ill, the disabled, the marginalized, and the less fortunate. Kindness, love, and generosity flow from many people in many ways and in many forms.

Small acts of kindness are making the world a much better place and can change the lives and the stories of many people.

Many people contribute to the pot ungrudgingly and are more than satisfied with what they have, though in reality they live with the daily stressors of living like most people do. Humility and gratitude are built firmly in their lives.

They don't think that life is perfect, but their wants are reasonable and even when they experience the difficulties and tragedies of life they live through them. They don't like it and they can experience true pain, but they tend to stay true to kindness and love even during of stress and heartache. There are angels among us.

Those of us who might not always be kind, loving, and generous… well maybe we are just doing the best we can. This is the imperfect heart. I do much better when I am less stressed and humble being content with reasonable happiness. Most people are the same.

What I support I support and when I give I give. When you have volunteered as a fundraiser you find it a bit difficult to say no to a cause. It is what it is.

I believe some of my writing has touched people, or so I have been told it does.

We all have wants and different things can, or will, help us to find reasonable happiness, or contentment.

Reasonability is a blessing. You will see this in the next poem that I am going to share with you. I wrote this at the café I frequent. It is titled “August Thoughts”

When subtle rain puts you at ease

The green of summer’s maple trees

A morning’s coffee peace today

A small town’s quiet quaint café

An easy stroll in solitude

A morning’s smile when joy intrudes

A pen that rhymes without much thought

A cancer scare that you’ve forgot

A restful sleep, a waking yawn

A warm and fuzzy welcomed dawn

A chocolate fix of dream’s delight

And last years pants that fit just right

When there's toilet paper for everyone

When people put away their guns

When the milk of human kindness grows

When hunger stops and foodbanks close

When women do not have to fear

The dark of night or what they wear

When angry drunkenness can end

When pollution stops and earth's our friend

A hope and prayer for world peace

The love of God that cannot cease

A visit from a friend of old

The placing of two bands of gold

A rising sun a moon that's full

The mower you don't have to pull

A sandy beach when work is done

A warm-up stretch an evening's run

When subtle rain puts you at ease

The green of summer's maple tree

A morning's coffee peace today

A small town's quiet quaint café

An easy stroll in solitude

A morning's smile when joy intrudes

A pen that rhymes without much thought

A cancer scare that you've forgot

A restful sleep, a waking yawn

A warm and fuzzy welcomed dawn

A chocolate fix of dream's delight

And last year's pants that fit just right

This poem just came to me with a realization that a subtle rain can reduce frustration levels when the grass needs water and the wells are becoming a little parched. It is a touch of hope and a reasonable want. Simple but humble reasonable things that make us reasonably happy, or should I just say happy and content. And joy, she intruded with a smile, a morning's smile.

I suppose I believe in a few good causes in this poem. Poems are just about simple hopes and decent thoughts. They are really just little stories reaching out.

Do you want to know something? There are other people who can relate to "August Thoughts". I know a musician at a coffee house at which I read "August Thoughts" had asked if anyone had thought about putting music to it. They said that they would like to try but it never happened. You may notice that I

repeat the first stanza. I found that metre comes repeated at times. That is probably what made them feel a possible song in it. Nonetheless, it's a decent poem.

I found joy in completing this poem and I find hope in its message. This is my humble ability. "The lover's hope the soldier's peace and the rhymes that little children say."

I have sat with people who are in a fog of contempt and ill will aimed towards the not so good. When I talk about the not so good, I am talking about people who are marginalized by a portion of today's society. The people who just can't make it without the foodbanks and the soup kitchens. The people who don't have the motivation to work or the ability to work. You know, the ones who some think all the tax dollars are going to support. If we put it all in a pot, do you really think that their fair share is less.

On numerous occasions I have created raffles, or I have asked for donations for artwork I have created. I did so for my local food bank and I have heard all different kinds responses. Many people stay clear of my table, but many people are glad to help with what they can. There are many people who put charity in their budget. That is just the way it is. Most people who use the foodbank are disabled or marginalized in someway or the other. Some people are just plain down on their luck.

You hear stories of kindness and generosity on social media, and they can be all good and true, but the real story is some people are hurting in more ways than one. They need a drink, they need a fix, they need a sandwich, but you don't know who is who. We might judge, but kindness doesn't judge. These people have fallen through the cracks.

I can remember someone telling me everyone needs to eat.

Everyone needs shelter.

Life is harsh, hard, and cruel to some people.

Mental illness and/or substance dependence really messes up people. Remember what we are, we are people. These diseases are destroying people's lives.

Who are the good people. The good people are the ones who are doing well or reasonably well in life. The ones who we can reach out to and say help alleviate the pains of poverty. The one who will listen. The ones who are moved by the need for help.

Many good people don't see the scars, the pain, the disorder, the disability, and the fragility that the not so good might live with.

I see this and I started a poem one day and I thought that I would call it "The Log". It was influenced from when Jesus said that you must first take the log out of your own eye before you can take the speck out of another person's eye.

A friend, who is disabled, was finding it difficult to navigate the system he is in. He was venting his frustrations to me. I wanted to fix him. I wanted to tell him how he should feel (which is a foolish endeavor) but something was stuck in my eye. I was reminded that I had a log in my eye. I listened, and heard his frustration.

I am not trying to be preachy with how we can fix other people's problems. I am talking about kindness and love. See we have people who I think society labels as good, and we have people who society labels as not so good. Or at least I used these categories from the implied labels others have said to me.

What I have found is the good can be touched or moved a bit to generosity. The not so good – well they are mostly just trying to survive and perhaps they have been too hardened by life to be moved by my words.

This doesn't mean the people labeled not so good can't be generous or kind, it means the not so good are the ones in need of kindness.

Let me talk about the fog some of us have lived in. I mean as the good and as the not so good. Some of us can do better. Let me touch you – put it all in a pot.

Here is “The Fog”.

For people are just people

Some are good – some not so much

And the good ones aren’t so special

But they’re easier to touch

With the sentiment of kindness

For they’ll hear of love and peace

But the not so good are hardened

And their love they can’t release

For the not so good are lonely

For their hearts were broke before

And the poets didn’t help them

And their homes were not for sure

Perhaps their old-mans beat them

And we trample on their pride

And their mom made them a promise

But mom simply, simply lied

And the good paid no attention

To the not so good's alone

And the not so good's intentions

Were simply never throw a stone

But in the darkness, they were beaten

And they were cut and choked and bruised

And the good heard simply nothing

And give help the good refused

And the not so good would walk and walk

Just to find another meal

And the not so good grew desperate

And they also learned to steal

Just a sandwich and a bottle

Under bridges they would lie

And the good were simply happy

But the not so good would cry

And the not so good are broken

And they're hungry and they're hurt

While the good sip on their coffee

Treating people like they're dirt

And from dust we all have come from

And to dust we all will be

And the not so good are precious

Within the eyes of God you see

So give a dollar to a pauper

Wipe the fog from in your eye

So give a dollar to a pauper

I don't blame you if you cry

For no one is too good you see

Please be kind another day

So give a dollar to a pauper

And let your kindness show the way.

As a person who has lived existing with an income below the poverty line, I know what it is like to live with the need to use the food banks and churches. There isn't much else you can do when most of your money goes to rent and utilities.

It wasn't cigarettes, booze, or pot that used up my income. I am a pauper of misfortune and yet to this day I identify with the less fortunate among society.

Today, I say put it all in a pot. Besides the fact that we are all people, the one thing we all have in common is that we all need an income to be able to get what we need just to survive.

Income is often obtained through the system of meritocracy. Often, societies give to the disabled and those who society say do not merit an income. They are given income because of what they cannot do in life. I have heard (and I don't know where this comes from) that it takes a village to raise a child. When that child grows, and circumstances dictate that the child will need help, most civilized villages will help.

If we do this maybe we will realize that all people matter. That black lives matter. That the LGBTQ+ community matters. That the mentally ill, the intellectually challenged, and the physically challenged matter. That the drunks, the addicts, and the people living on the streets matter. That the people who are incarcerated, the people in nursing homes, and the people in group homes matter. That all people of all occupations matter. That the people who sing songs, the people who are actors, the people who paint pictures and build statues matter. That we all matter. That the poets matter.

If you want to really start a dialogue, put it all in a pot. A peaceful dialogue. One day at a time.

I am a poet who has called myself a nobody poet on more that one occasion. I know that most poets leave simple poems - poems that will be forgotten and a few that some will remember.

I have heard it said that some people like hearing sweet nothings. This is simply the romantic heart.

Some people like poetry and more often than not poetry is saying something. It is the poets who describe love.

In 2015 I put together a few poems in a very small collection that I called Be Well Today. I wrote this project because I write. Writing pushes away vagrant thoughts and helps to quiet the noise in my mind. I write because I am a poet. Writing for me is a form of contemplation. It brings the muse.

In 2014 I had three psychotic breaks, one in which I overdosed on medication and almost died. This next untitled verse is the reality of being a person, an imperfect person, who is reaching out, sharing his thoughts, which one day might be part of a legacy of nothingness.

And the poets they leave nothingness

Unincredible unforsaken worlds

In blue bond greyish skies of paint

Which withers, peels and disappears

A page of love a wind of pain

Pronounced of that intensified

Is it our world so lost in time

So unintended though remembered

A life, a life, reclusive dreams

The pleasure of the world is peace

In hopes a smile, simple thoughts

In now we choose tomorrows world

Though yesterday is yesterday

And every breath that's drawn is life

When how this God hears everything

A song that rivers sing applause

Intrusive worlds so bold and free

When in this grass lies hush so calm

And evermore should fear subside

Where melancholy ladders cease

A crescent moon shall light a path

For unicorns of open seas

When waves they break, they crash in rage

Though ebbs a murmur's silent heart

A tribe is lost and lives no more

The small shall sleep in magic's breath

A quiet, quiet evening's sigh

Should the world's fountain flow with love

Before and after time shall sleep

A hibernating morning wakes

And shields are lowered, swords are sheathed

But what was war God what was war

A cruel, cruel nightmare's scream

And this is so I can't pretend

O' let my pen run dry in hope

O' let there be a world at peace

At ten to four this afternoon

A humble church at rest this day

I sit alone and love cries out

When tears won't fall but hearts shall pray

And love is love and hope is hope

Uncomplicated smiles will beam

So deep within good will lives true

And all along at rest we care

This poem was not the easiest poem that had been given to me by the muse. The world was unravelling in pride, fear and hatred. With all this ill will and prejudice all I knew was that we needed peace and love. And a bit of humility.

Perhaps the prophets have died. Perhaps the poets are just story tellers. Perhaps people are supposed to live their lives in some kind of jungle where only the strong will survive, and we don't give a damn about the less unfortunate. Perhaps we let greed run us into ruin.

I am not an economist or an industrialist. I am not a motivationalist or an ecologist. I am not anyone's role model or teacher. I am a person who lives a life with struggles and joys who is trying to say, "Put it all in a pot." And in this pot, you will find love, peace, confusion, heartache, and at times, pain.

And in this pot, perhaps you will find God. A God who loves all people. All people regardless of race, gender or gender identification, sexuality, ability, or disability. A God who loves all people regardless whether they are brave or frightened, young or old. A God who loves all people regardless of what our body is like. A God who loves those who are strong and those who are frail. A God who loves us even when others didn't or couldn't love us. A God who lets us know that they are love and that this God loves us even when we feel unlovable. A God who loves us even if when we feel we don't measure up. A God who want us to know that we are enough.

A God who lets us know that we are supposed to care about each other. And Jesus said that we are to love our neighbour as we love ourselves.

I struggle at times with the idea that we are unworthy of God's love as I felt that Christianity either taught us or teaches us. Yes, I have been a royal screw up at times, but I am a decent loving person. I am no hero, but I am a person.

I believe that God's grace is love and grace is love and love is for all of us. That love is a God thing, and that love is grace and grace is a God thing. And do you want to know something? God things happen all the time and many times they happen through people. I am awakening to this love. Life does this to us.

I often wonder about grace, and I believe that I have taken grace for granted as I believed that grace was a given. Perhaps it is, but I do not know. Understanding that one is receiving grace is something that makes us aware of our life and the grace of misery

It is not that unusual to hear the words the grace of misery but please try and understand. I believe the words of the song Amazing Grace will fill you in on the grace of misery (I am just paraphrasing words here so please be patient) –

"Amazing grace how sweet the sound

That saved a wretch like me…."

Grace comes when we realize the wretches we are. Perhaps not you but me, … and me too. I say that as the two, three, four, or five thought patterns that live in me. And on my own and by myself I have done nothing to come to this realization. My soul shattered and grace now owns it and holds it. I now realize this. It had to be shattered for me to know this. Perhaps this is my contribution to this pot I am trying to write about. It's about grace.

As I live in struggle, I am starting to touch an understanding of life, poetry, and writing. It can be difficult. Life has many uncertainties. Poetry, or the muse, is difficult to find and it is terribly misleading to think that one can control the creative process. We can edit the creative and we think that we can change a word or a phrase to say what we mean but really – can we? And the writing? Doesn't it just happen to fools like me?

Let me share with you a poem that I have just finished. It doesn't have the flow that I am used to, and I am not even sure how it reads. It is about finding grace :

“By The Blood of the Lamb”

Wishes of joy

Hopes of love

For why

Why

Should one know such Grace.

One stumbles blindly

Falls into deafness

Uttering diminished words of fancy

Pray shall we awaken

Pray shall we sleep

The soul that cries out in pain

The soul that smiles in gratitude

Which hits the borderland and shatters like glass

Owned and held by the blood of the Lamb

The wishes of joy

The hopes of love

A speck of faith

Caressed and hushed by grace

Shattered like glass

Owned and held by the blood of the Lamb

As I see, I am now understanding grace. It does frighten me to realize what grace is. Perhaps it is not for the righteous. Why do I say that? Do the righteous need God's grace? I am kind of thinking that they don't.

Perhaps, though, there are some of us who do. The ones who stumble, fall, and utter words of fancy. Amazing Grace…

Chapter Three

Trying to be a poet is not a noble vocation or avocation. There are people who have tinkered with it and have written much better poetry than I have. They choose not to contribute to the pot by doing this. I have struggled trying to accomplish the fulfillment of a goal or a dream and now I know it's not about making a living or being able to take care of me and my wife from doing so. It's not about changing the world or saving the world or being remembered years from now as an idealist or an artist.

It is about being healthy and contributing. It about sharing experiences, emotions, and hopes. It's about being a dreamer. It's about love. It's about life. It's about pain. It's about the calling the muse and being born to be creative. It's about balance and imbalance. It's about the voice that lives inside and it's about freedom. It's about joy. It's about connection.

As I write my poetry I do not do it just because it is my contribution to the pot. I am driven to write. That is the way it is for creatives. We do what we can.

Could I do it on demand? Well perhaps, but I might not like it. I am not really mainstream.

I have written the odd song lyric for people to put to music. Not a lot, but a few. That is a bit on demand.

The thing about writing lyrics when you're not a musician is that you're just doing an outline. You're doing something that might work. You're doing something that may or may not work.

What tends to happen is that the musician working with your lyrics is probably going to alter them.

Altering the written word can be a bit freaky to a poet. But this happens, and when it does, you learn to live with it. If you don't, you might not get a song out of your lyrics. I am going to share a lyric with you that I wrote quite a few years ago.

This was a lifetime ago. It's about a poet, a mad poet, who believed in the pot of equality. Or should I say the beginning of equality. Perhaps he had lost hope. Perhaps he wanted the happiness he just couldn't find. Perhaps he didn't know the grace of misery as he lived it. Perhaps he didn't know the gift of desperation. Perhaps he didn't know the gift of gratitude.

As I share this lyric with you, I think about the people I have met who write poetry or lyrics. They are the dreamers. But often, we let our visions fade or die. We become the innocent who do not get to understand grace.

This lyric has never had music put to it and I don't know if it ever will. For what I forge are words just words … for I will be and still I am … the lover's hope, the soldier's peace ….

This lyric is titled "He Walks into The Lonely Morn"

He walks into the lonely morn' a torn and tired man

In echoes of a demon face so few can understand

His world can't belong to most - he did what he could do

The prophets spoke of times like these but who would listen to

A man once mad or mad today a man who really cares

Each day he dies a little more, so much he's lost his tears

So shakingly and softly he says he's silencing his pen

So soon the night will come to him, he will never write again

He sewed some magic tales to dry the tears that he had wept

He was certified psychotic for a call that wasn't kept

Chained the poet's paper page he gave to us a key

That we could join together and begin equality

Many felt his pages but they fell right through their hands

Many changed their point of view, but few could understand

The fruits of life long labour but we let his vision die

But he knew this long ago and now he cannot cry

This world can be a horrid place and his pen will speak no more

If only we had listened, we just might have fed the poor

Now he hangs his head in shame and bit by bit he dies

A spirit of the early morn' is soon to say good-bye

His words I'm going to miss them - to me they were a friend

He spoke of truth and victory but his pain was not pretend

True he was a madman but his insight it was blessed

His pain is slowly killing him all he truly wants is rest

Now he wants time for his family and quiet's almost his

And he really doesn't care, you see ,for what the righteous says

He feels deeply for the dying, the hungry and the sick

He's walked their road for many years and it's getting very slick

Perhaps we should have listened, soon we'll never hear again

Because the madman's sick of dying and he is silencing his pen

This world can be a horrid place and his pen will speak no more

If only we had listened, we just might have fed the poor

Now he hangs his head in shame and bit by bit he dies

A spirit of the early morn' is soon to say good-bye

He isn't, copping out you see he only wants to smile

We truly couldn't understand how long he walked the miles

Some will know the madman but not many know his name

I do, smile little one, and run so far away

Enjoy the life you have today and go ahead and play

Let your pen be silent and leave behind the lonely morns

Do not hang your head in shame that's not why you were born

Perhaps we should have listened, soon we'll never hear again

Because the madman's sick of dying and he is silencing his pen

This is what happens, or perhaps what happened once upon a time, when I tried to write a lyric that I thought could be turned into a song. Is it mainstream? Not at all. It's about a mad poet who believes in social democracy - someone who believed in helping the hungry, sick, and dying. But how can someone help with words of fancy? Especially when you don't even send it out to be put to music. Maybe, just maybe. It's kind of frightening to think what it would be like if this poet existed. This poet is all the dreamers who believe in a better today for the hungry, the sick, and the dying. Imagine.

I know that people care about the hungry, the sick, and the dying. That is what social democracy is all about. We help each other, or should I say that we try to help each other.

Some people will say that it is all about me and mine. They have good jobs, good benefits and good health. They do what they can to help, but me and mine come first. Some people have jobs and Medicare or social benefits. And their health is good. They do what they can, but me and mine come first.

Some people do very well, and they say that it is all about me and mine and they do what they can. Nonetheless it's about me and mine come first. Some people have contributed and have secured the latter years for themselves to be okay. Their health can be good or a bit hampered or even failing and

they live doing what they can. Nonetheless me and mine come first, but often they are unselfish and kind to others.

Some people live with little – the disabled, the ill, the desolate - and they do what they can for themselves but rely on social programs. They do what they can, but me and mine come first.

All of us can be generous and kind. I almost want to say that all of us can be selfish and hard but that is not true. There are many good people who are generous and kind who want to take care of me and mine. Self-care is not selfish. And it can be done without being greedy and harsh.

Yet there are greedy and harsh people in this world. Social democracy tries to holds them at bay.

Social democracy shares in the work, the fortunes, and the necessities of society.

Here I am trying to paraphrase Jesus when he said that God makes the sun to rise on the good and the bad. God also makes the rain fall on the just and the unjust. I guess what he was saying is that we all share this world. We might as well make it a decent place for everyone.

The thing about social democracy is life is life and we have to do difficult. I am imagining life can be difficult for the people who do well financially and do well with work. Work is to be done for most people to do well at marketing their skills and often those who are doing well might have humble needs and reasonable wants. They work to contribute to be a part of those who put their marketable abilities in the pot. For me, for mine, and often for others.

From what I know about life is that life has struggles. Social democracy can probably reduce some of the struggles, but life has struggles. If we are reasonable about life, we know that there is pain in living. And some pain just can't be stopped even if one is living a financially comfortable life.

Being humble helps. I don't just mean the want of material things. I don't just mean whatever we do or put inside of us that numbs our uncomfortable feelings. Being humble, for me, is accepting grace, or

what I have called the grace of misery, and breathing through it. Praying, trying, and messing up but breathing, praying, and trying again. This is the humility of being human.

The grace of misery is a wonderful awareness that shatters all illusions that one might have of themselves. It is a painful, frightening experience that humbles one when one is fond of one's foolish delusions and they try to entertain such whims. It is the humbling of the ego.

Now perhaps we think all people will measure up the same in a social democracy, but we won't. There will be the strong, the not so strong, and the frail in society. In social democracy we care for each other. It's like a play. There are the leads, the supporting cast, the crew, and the rest of the people who make it all come together. I sort of hope that I am an extra.

Who watches this play? I think everyone does.

Imagine. Just imagine social democracy at its best. Would it be perfection? No. Would it be imperfect perfection? That's kind of a stretch. But it might be communities in action in a free and caring society. The thing is is that too many people are doing without because of unharnessed want. Obsessive want keeps us all depleted of joy. Joy is important. Remember this.

Society, or community, is to take care of ourselves and each other, our environment, our dwellings and our needs (including hospitals, schools, work places, stores, etc.). I haven't really travelled anywhere but I am assuming that free countries that share the wealth and live in peaceful and loving communities are living in a social democracy. But maybe I'm thinking foolishly. Why?

Perhaps I am foolish to believe in social democracy because greed, ill-will, and delusion exist.

I often say that obsessive want is an antagonist to being healthy, reasonable, and reasonably happy. We don't see that obsessive want is a stepping stone to greed. If we look at the obsessive want of addiction we see that no matter how much obsessive want is filled and chased and filled and chased, we find that obsessive want in itself is unhappiness. Or perhaps it is unhappiness that drives obsessive want.

I don't think that there is anything wrong with want. Want has produced many wonderful feelings and creations. I do, however, fear obsessive want and greed. In the 23rd Psalm is the line "The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want, He makes me to lie down in green pastures".

Can you relate to lying in a green pasture. Being one with a humble heart. Kind of curbs the obsessive want and the greed, doesn't it. Someday this might help us all, that is, if I understand community. It helps us to see social democracy.

Imagine.

As I think of the earlier statement of the grace of misery I am wondering how can there be grace in misery. After all, isn't grace just grace. Perhaps we can define grace as an unearned favour or gift. But how can we see grace in misery?

Misery is a very uncomfortable feeling. Perhaps we can describe it as sadness, depression, unworthiness, shame, or guilt, to name a few. But why is there grace in misery? When you hear someone say that you are not alone in feeling misery, you can believe and perhaps even feel that you are not alone.

Why do we have feelings like misery? I don't know. It might be part of the human process of the human journey.

Now don't get me wrong. I am not saying that the grace of misery is not grace. As I have said, the grace of misery shatters delusions and humbles the ego. The soul that we believe in is shattered by the grace of misery, and we know the narrative that our lives and our egos have created for us is no longer the grandiose being that we think we are. The ego is humbled enough to realize that it is not the be all and end all that entertained our minds and itself. We can see the small I – the soul that God created - and we know of the ego's mortality. We see that we are a small part of the universe, but we are no less than the trees and the stars like the reading "Desiderata" says (we are a child of the universe).

The grace of misery reveals this to us.

Perhaps some day my thoughts won't wander so much and perhaps, just perhaps, what I do will be accepted by this pot I believe in for social democracy.

The grace of misery is God's grace.

The ego still tries to recreate the narrative in its need to be. The story that wants it all and the delusions it creates are no longer so strong. The pot is a better place because of grace. The reality of humility.

Perhaps I am foolish to say such things.

Chapter Four

I think about introverted thinking and I have to explore the idea of an introverted world. Memoirs can be such creations of the personalized life. Perhaps ego really plays much more of a role in my life than I could ever have imagined.

I penned a line a long time ago, which I am going to paraphrase in order that it will be more gender neutral or inclusive.

“We all have our own world, our own demons, our own Armageddon, our own judgement and we are offered our own Salvation along this joyous and torrid path that we call life”.

This seems to be a cookie cutter belief that salvation appears to be a personal choice. It appears to be that personal choice and personal actions can merit us a reward in the hereafter of a Heaven eternal with perfect health and complete living peace.

I am now wondering if the above-mentioned statement is just complete introspection guided by egoic imaginings. Perhaps it is simply desires to fill the ego with hopes of being chosen. Perhaps it is the view of the mountain top discovered in joy and love and desperation. Maybe it is simple but welcomed gratitude.

It could be the longing for connection. The need to be loved. The want (yes, the want) to be.

As I look at the 23rd Psalm I see more than the simple lack of want of “The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want”. I see the gifts of gratitude and hope. Let me look into this as I copy the 23rd Psalm.

The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures

He leads me beside quiet waters

3 He restores my soul

He guides me in the path of righteousness

For His name’s sake

4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death

I fear no evil, for you are with me

Your rod and Your staff they comfort me

5 You do prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies

You have anointed my head with oil

My cup overflows

6 Surely goodness and loving kindness will follow me all he days of my life

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

As I look at this, what I had believed was lack of want was really gratitude for everything that David had in his life, in his faith, and in his hope.

Was David’s salvation, or his peace introverted? Perhaps it was - I really don’t know.

“Surely goodness and loving kindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever” - I believe this is a line of faith or a line of gratitude. I wonder if it is a line of hope.

What I have to remember was that David’s lineage was what Jesus was born into. The chosen meets the chosen. Perhaps it really is that simple. That was David’s world as a King of God’s chosen people.

But today. Does everyone have their own world today? Perhaps metaphysically. Is this form of thinking introspection?

I believe when we are trapped in the ego much of our thinking is introspection. The ego is I and we, me and my. The I and we and the me and my might sound like I am playing with words, but I am not. It is introverted thinking.

Please let us look at the statement near the beginning of the chapter, “ We all have our own world, our own demons, our own Armageddon, our own judgement and we are offered our own salvation along this joyous and torrid path that we call life”. If we look at and we are offered we see that something outside of ourselves offers us this salvation. It could be considered introspection and this introspective thinking reveals to us that there is some form of a savior but is it personal? Perhaps. At least so in the cookie cutter savior or God of some people.

The thing is is I believe in the pot. The God that wants us all. You know the Jesus that people talked about as identifying with the poor and the misfits. The God that said, “Render Caesar what is his”. But was Roman Empire social democracy? Probably not, even though some might argue that it was.

Caesar’s Empire conquered. What did Julius Caesar say, “I came, I saw, I conquered.” I know it is the wrong Caesar, but I am hoping you get the idea.

There is the happiness that we can find being humble. There is the happiness we can find not being bound with obsessive want. This is the sense of having inherent self-worth and inherent self-dignity. The sense of loving one another – neighbour and enemy.

Maybe just maybe the “we” we include is not the “we” that God includes. Maybe God includes everyone. Perhaps not all in the same communities, but with the same love.

Social democracy is about loving your neighbour but in our socially democratic countries I wonder who controls the economy. Is it the governments or is it the wealthiest of individuals with their extremely valued marketable commodities and marketing abilities?

What I understand is that the economies of social democracies are supposed to be controlled by the people, but economies are influenced by products such as oil and other energy sources and other such commodities. I am not an economist or an ecologist, but we need to find more sustainable resources which are more efficient and less harmful than oil and gas. I am pretty sure that this is a reality.

In the parable of the talents, Jesus says that those who have much will have more and those who have little will have less. It was a reality in his time, and it is a reality today. There are exceptions, of course, but this still doesn’t make it right that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Jesus was giving us a history and current day lesson.

Social democracy gives us all something. What I have learned from living in a social democracy is many times, those who have little are marginalized by the system of meritocracy. We have to merit everyone with inherent dignity and inherent worth. Maybe then the pot would be decent to everyone. We need to contribute what we can to the pot and maybe all would have more.

The reality of poetry to the pot is that it is, with exceptions, a minimalized contribution to the pot in regards to being a marketable commodity. That is why poets, and an uncertain amount of other creative people, must rely on other marketable abilities to contribute to and to take from the pot. If you are a disabled person, the pot, in theory, is supposed to contribute to you. Some people strongly disagree with this theory.

The thing about putting something in the pot is that you know you have contributed. Here is a poem I wrote called “And”

And I cry when they are happy

And I cry when they are sad

And I fight when they are vicious

And when they’re sane I am half mad

And their honour’s not my business

And their nights are sticks and stones

And their highs aren’t my decisions

And how they dig deep in my bones

And in the morning how they haunt me

And in my chills, I cry to God

And how the music’s simply music

And how I hear my tears applaud

And how my heart knows it is fallen

And how my soul is stoned and chained

And how I utter, and I utter

Crimson blood, the page is stained

And how my love weeps in a ballad

Seven thousand drops of gold

And the poets they are laughing

And the gamblers bow and fold

While the minutes tick for hours

Deep within the months and years

While I rhyme at sobbing flowers

With a jester's cloak of tears

And how the trees they search for sunshine

But how they wither without rain

Within a world lacking water

And the oceans have been drained

And how the stars they wander lonely

And the moon is never full

And how the comets are ripped shadows

Within this nothing that I mull

And how you feel the superficial

From those close and dear to you

For they shall never hear the voices

Nor shall they know the world is blue

And how you thank God for this blessing

And how you find a peace in this

Within this empty, empty writing

Within this sadness full of bliss

And then a river smiles in calmness

And then the trees grow green and bright

And all this beauty's simply stunning

And then the afternoon is light

And then the birds lay down a ballad

And the decaf taste so good

And how the children play in kindness

And all love is understood

And then the maple leaves are dancing

Within a gentle waltz of joy

And how my pen begins a journey

And then its ink's a little coy

Of a magic born of wishes

Where goodwill is feeling well

And how I touched a piece of heaven

And I have walked another hell

For I had lost my pen while walking

And I was loaned one just to use

And how I lost an early sadness

And how I found a better fuse

And three times I sort of smiled

And how they turned into a grin

And how I thanked God for the moment

And how I watched the joy begin

And in this world how I welcomed

Every breath that I had drawn

Every teardrop that had fallen

Every morning's breaking dawn

And in the quiet I found freedom

And in my chains, there was a mirth

And every heartache that had hurt me

And then I understood their worth

And then I stopped to eat a cracker

And I had a piece of cheese

And then I drew a draught of water

That did much much more than please

And as my mood grew silent passive

Within this joy of solitude

And how I thanked God for the moment

And for this sweet soft interlude

And the TV had no motion

And how the radio was mute

And perhaps my pen was rapid

For which my mind cannot dispute

That in the coming of the welcomed

Upon this Sunday afternoon

On this first day of September

Which seemed to come a little soon

As I walk, I walk together

And not alone another mile

Within a true insane surrender

And I surrendered with a smile

This poem “And” is about feelings and putting them on paper. It begins with a depressive sort of state that I imagine most people have either felt or have witnessed. Perhaps you have discovered it in what could have been another artist’s creation. In reality, it was influenced by the lows caused by voices or what some might call depressive thoughts. There is a bit of a difference. Please remember I wrote this. The muse that visited – well it came in thought.

This poem was written between the café I frequent and my kitchen. In my kitchen I felt the low and then I walked to the café to meet friends from out of town.

As I arrived early before the meeting time, I thought I would work on “And” but I had lost my pen. “And” had no title at that time but I did want to work on it. I borrowed a pen from the woman at the counter and went to work on this musing.

My visit with my friends was welcomed but I was still in a funk. I was and I am still grateful that most people don’t have to live with a persistent illness. I know all people have their struggles and I know most people have their days. It just seems to hang around for some of us more often and for longer times than others.

While sitting on the back deck of the café, which overviewed the St. Croix River, the muse did its magic, “And then a river smiles in calmness”

This opened a far more positive flow for the remainder of the poem.

Even though “And” began with struggle it is still a good poem. It is a nice little story about thoughts on a Sunday afternoon on the first day of September that seemed to come a little soon. Maybe it’s just a narrative. Imagine this being a lyric.

I think about the noise, the thought, or the voice of depression that was somehow put inside me and I recognize that it then became the inspiration for the muse to draw out, find, or create “And”. This enables me to think about the silence that I experience. Perhaps it’s like an “aha moment” or what I think are subtle epiphanies. This next poem I am going to share with you is called “If Silence Stopped”. I wrote it while on a silent retreat. Silence is a funny thing isn’t it?

“If Silence Stopped”

If silence stopped, you wouldn’t hear the songs that songbirds sing

You wouldn’t hear the whooshing wind or any other thing

You wouldn’t hear the joy of love or hear the children dance

You wouldn’t hear the buzzing bee or a raindrop’s second chance

If silence stopped, you wouldn’t hear the church bells as they chime

You wouldn’t hear the trumpets sound or poets when they rhyme

You wouldn’t hear the whistle blow to start the morning’s work

You wouldn’t hear the grass be cut or hear the coffee perk

If silence stopped, you wouldn’t hear the waves crash on the beach

You wouldn’t hear that every day puts love within our reach

You wouldn’t hear the doe and fawn or the beauty that they give

You wouldn’t hear the gift of joy in this world that we live

If silence stopped, you wouldn’t hear that peace is meant for you

You wouldn’t hear that people care or that the sky is blue

You wouldn’t hear when troubles come that they can go away

You wouldn’t hear that Heaven’s real and we don’t have to pay

If silence stopped, you wouldn’t hear that people live and die

You wouldn’t hear that people laugh and sometimes people cry

You wouldn’t hear that love is real but sometimes people fall

You wouldn’t hear that we have hope and hope comes for us all

If silence stopped, you wouldn’t hear the song that songbirds sing

You wouldn’t hear the whooshing wind or any other thing

You wouldn’t hear the joy of love or hear the children dance

You wouldn't hear the buzzing bee or a raindrops second chance

If silence stopped, you wouldn't hear that peace is meant for you

You wouldn't hear that people care or that the sky is blue

You wouldn't hear when troubles come that they can go away

You wouldn't hear that Heaven's real and we don't have to pay

If silence stopped, if silence stopped you simply wouldn't hear

If silence stopped, if silence stopped you simply wouldn't hear

You wouldn't hear that love is real but sometimes tears will fall

You wouldn't hear that we have hope and hope comes for us all

As I look at this poem, I see most people can relate to this. It's sort of a wellness awareness narrative. It's reality and healthy.

I was invited to a poetry session that an acclaimed poet was facilitating at St. Stephen's University and I once again discovered that rhyming poetry is frowned upon in poetic circles.

The unpopularity of rhyming poetry could be just one of the reasons why I, and others don't consider my poetry much of contribution to the pot. The reality is is that there isn't much of a market for it and it is marketing value that dictates the value of your product.

In reality, it doesn't devalue me in the concept of a social democracy nor in the consideration of some of its people. Heaven is real and we don't have to pay. The dreamers and the misfits are welcomed too.

Chapter Five

The reality of social democracy is that many of us feel the desire to lighten up the mood a bit when things get difficult. Humour helps not only to relieve stress, but it helps some people contribute to the pot by being their marketable commodity to help entertain certain audiences.

In my life I have attempted to entertain people with some of the poetry I have written. I have had a few attempts at being humorous at the odd coffee house.

In my younger years I attempted to be humorous writing adult poetry using colorful language and very liberal ideas. If I was to share some of these poems you would call me crude, obnoxious, vulgar, bigoted, and sexist. Some of you would find these writings offensive; some of you would laugh.

I choose not to share these works with you. In reality, they are censorable material.

As I think of some of the poems that I have read at coffee houses in which I was a participant, I do recall a poem that did draw a lot of laughs.

In 2018 - 2019 Atlantic Canada was hit by an ice storm or two and it was a difficult winter for us who live here. And dealing with an ice storm in March is a pain and after going through a colder than usual November, December, January, and February. By March you are hoping for a bit of a break.

I was trying to write something humorous for a couple of weeks, but nothing would come. And then Winter 2019 came. Somehow it helped to lighten up the mood of a March evening when the weather forecast was calling for a snowstorm. If this was a contribution to the pot it was well received.

“Winter 2019”

A Winter quite cold my old bones sort of ache

And I yearn for warm weather and for spring just to wake

But they’re calling for snow and I’m sort of fed up

While I’m cursing this March for enough is enough

For this winter brought ice, bringing ice, bringing ice

And the car doors were froze more than once more than twice

As it is an old Tauris please don’t call me a liar

For I thawed them a lot with my wife’s new hairdryer

And the ice on the steps – more than two inches thick

So I chopped and I chopped put down salt quite a bit

And I cursed and I cursed and I cursed at the ice

And I often spoke words, I spoke words that weren’t nice

And the wind how it blew, and my cat stayed inside

And my house got so cold that my cactus plant died

And I haven't hung clothes on my line for so long

And my heating bill's high and the litter smells strong

Oh my hip is in pain and it's hard just to walk

And the cold is so cold that it's hard to just talk

As I don't go for coffee near as much as I like

For my money's all gone as the heating cost spike

But my winter coat's warm I've a toque on my head

But it's so awful cold that I wear them in bed

And my cat likes to snuggle between me and my wife

But what else can you do for it's cold and it's life

And it's life and it's life in this little cold town

With the ice and the snow and the frozen hard ground

And I'm waiting for spring and I'm longing for summer

This winter was cold a real cold frigging bummer.

One reading does not become a career or a job in stand-up comedy but it was an amusing little performance. It was a time for people to laugh and be entertained for a few minutes. When the show was done and the audience, the entertainers, the workers, and the organizers were gone it was up to me to contribute to the pot in another way. The church where this coffee house was at was the building that I clean for my paid casual job.

Even though coffee houses are usually a good experience for performers and audience alike, I usually opt out for most of them. Often I don't have the capability to pull it all together for a reading performance. I don't regret this. It is just the way it is.

The thing I find about humour is I find it can open up an audience for a main read. Winter 2019 was a main read the night I read it. Putting in a light read not only loosens up a reader, but it can ease the reader into a more serious read. I will walk you through a series of reads that begin light with a bit of humour into a more serious read to be the main read.

One of the few other coffee houses that I read at was in November a few days before Remembrance Day in Canada. I had a more serious poem to read that night as the main read.

I am usually quite anxious when I am going to read, and I thought I would settle myself with an easy read and then a light read. I brought with me a makeshift booklet that I had used a few years prior to that night as a fundraiser for the local foodbank.

Usually there is some jibber jabber in the audience, and I am almost frozen when I step up to the mike. With nervousness in the driver's seat, I start with a short poem in free verse. By the end of this terrified read the jibber jabber has stopped, at least for some to applaud, and then I am more ready to engage in a calmer read.

Theses next two poems I will share are an attempt two entertain people with humour. Both of these have been received with laughter and applause. These poems are written from the perspective of a young child. The first is “Brush Your Teeth”

I brush my teeth most every day

That’s what I’m told to do.

I brush ‘em up, I brush ‘em down

I bet you do it too

The dentist saw a gravity

And filled it with some stuff

I don’t want no more gravities

For one was sure enough

So brush your teeth most every day

Brush ‘em down and brush ‘em up

Or else you’ll do what Grampy does

And soak ‘em in a cup

When there is applause and laughter when you are attempting to be humorous you settle in a bit. It was only a small audience of a bit more than 100 people, but when you are in front of them you feel naked.

In reality, it's quite an accomplishment for some people to get up in front of an audience. For some of us it can be quite difficult. Humour either works or it doesn't. You know if it is working pretty early into your performance.

Some people would think reading poetry isn't a performance, but it is. And performing poetry is a difficult thing to do.

The next poem I used to settle in was a poem about a pesky dog. Remember, not only was I trying to make the audience laugh I was trying to engage in catching their attention and hopefully inviting these people who were listening to pay attention to the next read. Here is the second attempt at humour. And I remind you "Mr. Ruff" is also written from the perspective of a young child.

Our dog he is the bestest dog, we named him Mr. Ruff

He chases cats, he chases balls, and all that doggy stuff

We love him dearly, everyday, we feed him very good

We sort of have a problem though, he has a thing for wood

Mr. Ruff's a special dog, he sits and he can beg

But Dad's upset with Mr. Ruff he ate the couch's leg

This was using humour for the sake of entertainment. I believe it's good healthy fun. Not only did it get the audience's attention, but it led them into an attentive frame of mind to read a poem in honour of Remembrance Day. On that evening I read "Hero"

A man – a brave man

His face bore the lines

And worries of

Eighty-four years

He saw a much different

World than me

He is a decorated

And true hero

The angel of death

Was no stranger

To his fallen comrades

And his fallen enemies

But he did what he had to

For he answered freely

His call of duty

Young and foolish

I longed to be a hero

And I questioned

This courageous soldier –

“What’s it like to be a hero?”

We sat in his cellar

As he quenched his thirst

With a drink of rye

And he flinched as the

Canada Day fireworks

Exploded

Then he sadly replied

“Had there been another way

I would have taken it.”

These reads I did were a contribution to the pot. The thing about reading or being a singer or a musician at a coffee house is you probably aren’t going to receive a financial gain from the pot unless you are a featured artist. At the coffee houses that we used to have at our church it was usually only the featured artist and the sound person who got paid. Also featured artists and other musicians could sell CDs. There was also a wall where they hung paintings and other forms of visual arts. Some visual artists did sell some of their work there.

The rest of us we contributed our art to the coffee house pot because we do what we do.

Now as you can see, that the poems “Brush Your Teeth” and “Mr. Ruff” were my attempt at humour. The poem “Hero” was dead serious.

In Ecclesiastics it talks about a time to laugh and a time to cry. There are seasons.

These are realities.

For a long time we have not seen a season of togetherness because we choose not to. Put it all in a pot.

I paraphrase scripture as I talk about the pot. My thoughts are not original. I am just a person who writes poetry who is hoping that my words, my simple words which are not so good – not so elevated – not so descriptive, and not so well informed might become my humble contribution to the pot.

Scripture tells me about love, peace, good-will, and kindness. This is what we put in the pot. This is what we take from the pot by loving our neighbour as ourselves and by loving our enemy. By loving God and loving life.

I believe, and I believe in my ignorance, or in my innocence, that other religions want the same thing. This is the need for kindred and connection. This is the need for love and peace.

This is what the pot offers us.

Chapter Six

If I think about the pot as what earth has given to us or as what we have taken from earth, you are probably not surprised when I write we need to keep the planet healthy and life sustainable. Do we understand that we need radical change, or radical implementations, to maintain earth's ecosystems?

We need to listen to the warnings that climate change is causing damage to what we call our and other life form's natural habitats. It gets me down when I think of the damage we do. And we do this in the name of survival, comfort and ease. We all do this - some of us more than others.

What is in the pot for us? I think many of us should try and be a bit more frugal with what the pot gives us. And now I am talking about the pot being earth as in our natural environment. There has to be better ways to manage what we take from the pot. I hear the words  conserve, reduce, reuse, and recycle.

As I sit here thinking of climate change as my dryer is drying towels, I want to share a poem with you. It is titled "Whirr And Ahirr  (thinking of climate change)"

Down is my day

It simply is

The dryer

Whirr and Ahirr

Whirr and Ahirr

I saw the

yellow

red

gold

Gathered bumpily

Juttery

on the green grass

The sun

was beautiful

I guess

Whirr and Ahirr

Whirr and Ahirr

Down is my day

It simply is

It was a cold autumn day when I wrote this poem and it is a cold winter night as I pen these words. What really brought my attention to climate change is Greta Thunberg and the awareness she is trying to bring to people who don't really think the effects of climate change are harmful. I believe she simply said something like, "Listen to the scientists."

I know children began to march and raise awareness that the harmful effects of climate change are real. What we are doing is real. If one was to love, life why would we do what we do to our environment? Is it obsessive want and the inability to manage what we really need?. Will love change, or undo, what we have done? Let's hope.

As I think about the line love saves all, I think about the idea that we need to have faith in love. But can we have faith in love?

I remember that Jesus said that if we had faith the size of a mustard seed, we could move mountains. Somebody told me once that if you ask God to help you move a mountain he will give you a shovel and then maybe a group of his people will come with their shovels and help you move it.

This next poem is titled "Oh Where is the Faith In Love"

Oh where is the faith in love

A love so tried and true

It seems the paupers keep it bold

In their madness

And in silent sadness

For such a faith did not begin

It simply is

Oh where is the faith in love

A love so tried and true

Faith in love

Shall cast the waves

And dance the stars

And hold the winds

For faith in love

It is

It simply is

It is where children march to save their world

Their world

Their world

Their world

It is

It simply is.

And they leave their guns at home

Oh where is the faith in love

A love so tried and true

It is

It simply is.

First Nations' people say we only borrow the Earth from our children. Do we really understand this wisdom? And they also know we must keep the water clean and safe. Are we too foolish to listen to their truth?

As I think about throwing a poem into the pot, I do think about what can another sad narrative do to increase goodwill to you? If you find the snow a bother when you are in your 60s perhaps you can relate

to the poem I am going to share with you. If you live with Seasonal Affective Disorder you will probably identify with this next poem regardless of your age.

“Grey Day”

The snow fell today

it wasn’t fancy

It wasn’t sugar cookies

and

Christmas dreams

It was icy

and heavy

and slippery

on a

grey day

There it is

OH HEAVES MY CHEST

It comes and goes on grey days

Decaf turns cold and blahh

Soon

so soon

The sun will shine… nice!

I found as I was writing “Grey Day” I was bummed out and I just had to get it out. Writing is a good release for me. In the last stanza of this poem, you see hope. Many people do the same with their writing. Some call it venting. Some people call it complaining or negative.

I call it release.

It is drawing from your inner pot to look for hope or to discover hope. And the secret is is when you draw hope from the inner pot you replenish the inner pot with hope.

It’s a renewable resource.

When we look at hope as a renewable resource, we can be reasonable and reasonably happy – (this is being content). In being reasonable we know, or we should know, we should instill in our young the dream of having a healthy world for them to live in.

So how do we restore a healthy world for them to live in?

We conserve, reduce, reuse, and recycle. We find or create better energy sources that do not harm our environment. And we stop making products that wear out so quickly.

And maybe when we reduce, we reduce stress and poverty, and we can be environment friendly. What are the stressors? The stressors are finding ways to fill our needs and our wants. The stressors are fear and disconnection. The stressors are we are not taught to love our neighbours as ourselves. The stressors are we make enemies of other people and we don't realize we are making enemies of our neighbours. The stressors are we don't know that we are enough.

How do we not understand that WE ARE ALL HUMAN BEINGS (ALL OF US)? We are all enough.

Don't we all want to share what we have to share. We can all have our own that we should have but we don't own this planet. It is a loan from our children that we all need to share.

Jesus said something like in my Father's home there are many rooms. When I was a small child, I was told that Jesus said in my Father's home there are many mansions.

Today I believe we all need our own room. We should all have our essentials of life in our own room or our dwelling place. Many people will choose to share our dwelling place with others. But how do we do this? In hope I see we are on our way.

The idea of social democracy is for everyone to have their own room or dwelling (or mansion) that can provide them with their needs and their non obsessive wants.

We cannot obtain this by polluting the environment, raping the planet, or obsessively wanting just for the sake of obsessively wanting. And we certainly cannot obtain this by hating, fearing or wishing ill will to our fellow human beings.

There is a native North American lesson that says that there are two wolves that live in all of us. There is a struggle between the two wolves, and one will influence our lives in order to lay out the path our lives

will take. One wolf is love and one wolf is hate. The story says the one that loves will influence us to live in peace and to share good will with others. The one that hates will influence us to wage war and to do ill will towards others. When we ask our elders which one will influence us the most and which one will we choose to follow, they tell us, “It will be the one that we feed.”

We need to put it all in one pot of social democracy. At least this is what this unlearned, uneducated, and unwise fool believes. If we keep feeding the wrong wolf, we could leave this world in a mess. That is a frightening scenario, isn’t it?

The world would be healthier if we listened to the voice of reason. That means if we listened to the doctors, scientists and the people of love and peace, we would all be better off today.

The planet earth is our pot for today.

I remember approximately 16 years ago writing a poem about how much we were creating global warming as we were polluting our environment.

I had been watching my son playing minor basketball at a young age and as he shot baskets he had a soft touch. Many times, nothing but net. I was recalling the native truth that we borrowed the earth from our children. I recognize the carnage of pollution and war. I guess it is a common theme in some of my poetry. The kids deserve to have a chance. Maybe that is another pot we could fill. If we see this world as belonging to the kids, maybe we would like to give them a chance.

We could give them peace, love and a manageable environment.

This poem is called “The Soft Touch”

He sleeps softly and so silently

May his dreams be filled with mirth

With a basketball his touch is soft

And I would give to him the Earth

So I worry for his future

Since I'm truly not informed

As mankind spews a creature live

'tis a beast I've truly scorned

The wars and waste, the result of haste

A planet on the run

And madmen boast and jackals gloat

Of the carnage we have done

He sleeps silently so softly

Will his dreams be filled with mirth?

For all we watch as they're sleeping soft

Let us end this dreadful curse

In part the wars we can control

Peace keeping's  what it's called

For the hungry beast we have released

Let us simply let it fall

For softly and so silently

Our precious ones do sleep

We are the shepherds of a flock

Who are watching over sheep

For I know the world belongs to them

A Native truth does say

Our world simply is a loan

So that they can have their day

But for now, he sleeps so silently

May his dreams be filled with mirth

With a basketball his touch is soft

And he does deserve the earth

Chapter Seven

As I think of what is in the pot, I see that many people like to feel good by catching a buzz or getting wasted. Being reasonable and reasonably happy for me is a journey that I have taken, and still I am taking after years of being self-served and self-centered. Marijuana and booze were the only way that I could kick off my shoes and enjoy life. I must be honest in saying that if something different was around I would have probably taken that also. And many times, I did.

What do I really know about using cannabis and booze to feel good? They were my drugs of choice between the ages of 11 and 30. During these years I lived a hedonistic, irresponsible life.

During these years I had periodic times of almost responsible living, but what can one do when they become so messed up that they can't play a responsible enough role to maintain relationships?

I am a person who can't maintain gainful employment. I know this today. This is a hard fact to accept, for myself and also many other people. It is a full-time job managing a major mental illness and trying to work casually to bring in a bit of extra-monies to the pot that Brenda and I have to draw from. There are many households and people who live this reality.

If I decided to go back to the old life it would be catastrophic and dangerous. Life would simply fall apart.

Booze, pot, and all the other drugs that go with it are rampant today. Pot is legal in Canada. Lives and livelihoods are being lost because of the effects of booze and pot.

It doesn't happen to everyone who drinks alcohol and smokes pot, but it does happen to people like me. Notice I use the label people. We are people.

How can pot mess up people. This fact is not arguable. Cannabis induces psychosis. Alcohol can induce psychosis. Have you ever heard the lines "they are wiped out of their tree" or "they were blind drunk"? It happens. They induce psychosis.

If one's life is unmanageable because of cannabis or alcohol, one should stop. And if you are one of the people they induce psychosis in, you should stop. These substances alter your personality and your life-style.

Some people who get into trouble because of booze and/or pot either stop or moderate on their own. Some people go the way of rehab programs and/or counselling. Some people go to 12-step fellowships. For some people they have some form of a spiritual awakening. Some people go to church.

Here is a reality – some people die.

How has alcohol and cannabis contributed economically to the pot in Canada? They are both regulated and sold by the government. And there is quite a market for them. Many people like the effect.

You hear the words "Be Responsible" when you choose to partake in either or both. Some people do.

Here is another reality – some people can't be responsible.

Sixteen years ago I wrote a poem about where substance abuse took me.

This poem is called – "The Walls Still Breathe"

Near

Three times five

Years

I have been

Clean and sober

Cigarettes – booze

Hash and pot

Were habitual

By the time

I was eleven

By the time

I was seventeen

Acid was

(As I believed)

A quest of

Spirituality

By the time

I was nineteen

I broke a bone

In my neck

During a

Football game

With the boys

Just a game

For fun

Not in a league

The doctor

Prescribed

Talwin

Which wasn’t

Strong enough

And then Demerol

I took the

Demerol as prescribed

But the remaining Talwin

I ate like candy

Within a month

I was at my doctor's office

Looking for morphine –

He cut me off

Opiates

Only a month's worth

And when it was taken

Away

I was enraged

Nobody

Told me

I could snort

My opiates

For I would

Have

For I have

Snorted my

Share of

Mescaline and PCP

Near

Three times five

Years

I have been

Clean and sober

And I can

Face life

Without

Being wasted

But the

Opiate epidemic

Scares me

For teens

Today

Are testing

Positive

For HIV

And hepatitis

From sharing

Needles and straws

And having

Unprotected sex

Near

Three times five

Years

I have been

Clean and sober

And I pray

I will stay that way

Today

For I have

Been blessed

To face life

Both

Good fortune

And tragedy

Clean and sober

Please

Protect yourself

And

Put down

Your needles and straws

Your hallucinogenics

Your pot

Because

Near

Three time five

Years

I have been

Clean and sober

And though

I was lucky

The walls

Still breathe

The reality is people get buzzed and wasted and there is nothing I can do or say to change that. It is a personal and societal choice.

Here is the thing, though. Many people want to stop getting buzzed and wasted, but they just don't have the supports to do so. There is no easy fix.

The apostle Paul wrote something like faith, hope, and love are great virtues. (At least something similar to this) What I do know is he said love is the greatest of them.

When you see people trying to get clean and trying to sober up and they just can't do it, it is frustrating and painful. If you were a person who struggled, you relate to those who just can't get on the road to the straight and narrow. You want to tell them that the ones who have done it know that the road ain't so straight and narrow. And those of us who did it in a winding road will tell them, "We ain't saints."

Often it is the gift of desperation that started their winding imperfect journey and that they held on just one day at a time and sometimes decades later they are just holding on for one more day. Some will say take it one step at a time.

The pot is always in need of more love. Maybe if there were better facilities, better education, better supports, and less ego inflation with its demands, we could help those of us who need a one day at a time journey to be well. Maybe if we found we are loved by a spirit (a spirit I call God) we could find a way to stop getting buzzed and wasted when we could see that we were hurting ourselves when our lives are falling apart. Maybe if we could see that others are doing onto us as we would do onto ourselves we could see we are loved. And maybe then we could take the love from the pot and one day pay it forward.

I believe I will add a poem in here that I wrote a little over twelve years ago. It is called “Truly That Is Life”

You look into the mirror and you think your life’s a mess

Booze, drugs, rock’n’roll, what is the use you guess

You’re tired and so beaten, you just want to pass away

You are lonely and you’re sick of it, why not end your life today

You look back into your childhood, a victim of abuse

Your pain burns deeply in your veins like a home-made hangman’s noose

But rise above this torrid crap and walk in life so free

But truly who the hell am I and why should you hear me?

One day I grew psychotic, there was fire in my brain

The booze, the drugs, the rock’n’roll, drove me totally insane

My childhood was as it was and to your pain I can relate

By the Grace of God the past eighteen years have been a better fate

Clean and sober I have been, freedom day by day

I have put away my hangman's noose and I have found a better way

Love and understanding, family, friends and God

Exalt do I the living Christ, is that so truly odd?

My freedom be it day by day with professional and peer

Support and strength, a living dream diminishing my fear

A son I promised when he a babe that I would never use

Day by day for all his life and now there's no excuse

His Mom and I we grew apart, but he is loved by both of us

And God made new my broken heart and then shook off the dust

And He sent a woman beautiful whom I love so very true

Though my life is not a fairy-tale, I do implore to you

Put down the booze and drugs I plead, the hangman's noose will go

For eighteen years I've lived so free but truly I can't show

It's a life you must experience, a miracle I say

So take it simple, take it slow, and take it day by day

Of professionals be not afraid or your family or clean friends

If you ask me why I'm writing this, I just want your pain to end

For I am free, you can be too, living facing strife

Living clean and being free now truly that is life

This was another poem for the pot. Some people relate to it. Some people find hope. But many people who are wrapped up in booze or pot don't see the relevance of my little poetic stories about addictions and recovery.

This might be because of my language and experience. I don't know today's drug vocabulary and I never was a person to drink alcohol every day. I got wasted quite often even when I had no plans for it. Also the references to scripture in this book, and my attempts to be a Christian (or at least a more Christian like person) probably turns off many people who might be able to benefit from what I have contributed to the pot in the past three decades.

The many shortcomings that I have are more evident to me in each passing day. The little that I know about social democracy and the life that it offers is not something that I am well informed in.

What I do know is that this world has hatred and anger fuelled by what makes people wasted.

This is an imaginary and a not so imaginary story about a homeless man who fell victim to the violence unleashed upon him by three drunken men. It is called "Brother"

His mind was twisted spiders caught in cold sharp biting ice

A subway grate his home his fate infested with headlice

And no-one cared to see his pain which held an empty hand

Which would taste a bit of change some days or be filled from garbage cans

Even prostitutes would utter he was an enemy of time

And poets uttered unheard words when they were much too drunk to rhyme

His life tragic like an earthquake a design of living death

He's a fighting, breathing hero that the masses call a myth

I escaped an ounce of contact with his eyes I walked right by

He did not speak he was so meek my heart of guilt did pry

As a criminal born to return and lay some change on him

I was too late, it was his fate, I ne'er saw him again

Now he's ash, three drunken men beat him 'til he died

And noone even knew his name nor truly had one cried

But a dancing sky of blue sang out how could we understand

He was a beloved brother beautiful to the one true Son of Man

This is all part of what wasted puts into the pot of social democracy. This is all that many people believe that wasted will put into the pot of social democracy.

Indirectly, being wasted was what enabled me to put everything that I am writing into the pot. People change. Tragically, we experience a pain that others just can't know. Tragically, we experience the gift of desperation. Tragically, we experience (from dire and heart- breaking lives) the gift of gratitude.

I had to stop the wasted and I cried out God help me. By grace I discovered the grace of misery and in this grace I found reality and in this grace I am free to love and to be loved.

Some of us can't be wasted because of the harm we do to others and ourselves. Some people – perhaps can. For all of us – be free.

You simply must know the experience of being well in social democracy. Put it all in the pot.

Chapter 8

When I think of contributing to the pot in a social democracy, I think of what little a person like me can actually give. I used to believe that I made a difference with the writing that I do and the talks I have given, but in all reality what have I really done?

Perhaps I have told people to be responsible for their wellness. Perhaps I have tried to make people aware that people with mental health disorders and people with addictions are actually people. I have tried to make people see that people are more than just the stigmatic label that is attached to them. That all people are people first and not just things to be shunned, hated, discarded and ostracised.

People are different. Diversity is to be honoured and respected. It seems we are all fighting to be in charge either as the I am or the we are. The we are form demographic and ideologic communities both small and large. I just don't see the purpose in hating people, but people do and hate is dangerous. We dehumanize people because of it.

I know that I have made reference to scripture in this book and I do so in an appeal to let you see part of what has influenced me as I grow-up one day at a time. Often, I have been influenced by music and a bit of literature (I don't read very well). It is hard for me to understand ideas or theories that I haven't already conceived as my truth, but I am becoming more open to new ideas, and I am less critical of people who I have dismissed because I was so wrapped in self. I thought I had all the answers.

During the onset of the disorder that I live, with I was so full of delusion that I, at that time, believed myself to be the Anti-Christ. Today I know that I didn't understand the hypocrisy that I believed Christianity was based on was just the actual hypocrisy burned deeply into an inflated and deluded ego. Churches are imperfect – people are imperfect. In reality, when a church shuns or devalues any human being, they are not Christ-like at all.

Today, Jesus, because of the human being he was, is one of my heroes. Today Jesus is an Incarnation and savior. Jesus is the greatest hope that I have ever known. These beliefs help calm my anxieties and my fears.

In my recent years I have started to become aware when "God-things" happen. A little more to say about this is a "God-thing" is when you, or others, experience joys, love, and kindness. Or it is when you simply find yourself simply helping someone in a struggle simply because empathy, love, and concern directed you to.

It's what community and social democracy are all about. It's what so many countries in this world are all about. It is goodness and good will in action. It is people working to help each other. It's an imperfect world where some days are better than others.

It's a life where we try to let the good outweigh the bad and we (or some of us) try not to be swayed by the dark forces of existence. The dark forces exist - do not think that they don't.

Power is an invitation to these dark forces. They want power, and in their hands, power corrupts. They want absolute power, and in their hands absolute, power corrupts absolutely.

What we need to discover is we are the hands of the dark forces by harbouring hate, ill-will, greed and war.

Social democracy needs to adhere to the principles of love, kindness, hope and peace. Within our very core is light. An non-extinguishable light of love, hope, kindness, and peace. The suit of armour that we

wrap around our very core can often protect us from what we do not need protection from (the love of humanity for all of humanity). That is what social democracy is about. In other words, loving your fellow human beings and loving what is a home that we are blindly destroying. We were born to let the light shine through.

As I have said earlier, I don't write poetry just for the reason of contributing to a social democratic pot. I am driven to write. To put it another way it's just what I do because I am a poor verbal communicator. I believe we all want to say something. You see, we all want to put our two cents in the pot.

I hope that you do understand, that in some small way, I am trying to contribute to the pot by the poems and the other word-work that I do. If you have read this much of this book, I must have caught your attention somewhere or someway.

In reality, I have no credibility as a poet, and a poet is what I am. I do what I do. These are my little poetic stories. If I was musical, I would write modern opera.

Let me share what I do as a poet. I will do it in the following poem "Poet" –

I sharpen my pencil

I wait for a thought

One comes in a moment

And then it's forgot

Poetic devices

Are not my concern

I believe I was taught

But I still had to learn

Expressing my feelings

My dreams and my views

Three plus one equals four

One plus one equals two

Inspiration's my craft

Be it light, be it harsh

Like a river I flow

Or in a desert I'm parched

So if I made you smile

Or I brought you a tear

Maybe made you upset

Or created a fear

Perhaps opened your heart

To believe in true love

Or I gave you a hope

Of the Almighty's Dove

And if I touched you Carl

Or Susan or Bob

I am simply a poet

Who is doing his job

The core of social democracy is not the pot. We are the core of social democracy. Nature, natural, and non-natural occurrences are the pot. Human endeavors are the pot. Social democracy is a result of people and what we put in the pot is the result of social democracy. The pot is what most of us believe in whether we admit it or not. When social democracy is working well, the pot becomes quite a bit more generous.

We simply must see we can do better by working on ourselves. Humanity is a one but it's a one of many. The pot is something most of us contribute to in one way or another. But being in one is within.

Let me try to explain being in one with a poem that might be a bit difficult to grasp but if you do grasp it you will see one as a reality.

"Reality"

Being

In one

Not with

Nature

Nor providence

For truly

We cannot

Fully

Comprehend

Either

But we

Can

In innocence

Embrace

Light/dark

Good/evil

Life/death

And stand

Alone

Beneath

A

Whispering

Moon

As the mighty

Tides

Flow and ebb

Reclusive

Is their mystery

But in one

And

Cannot

We lie

As

A

Tepid pool

Calm

Peaceful

One

For no

Reason

But

Being

In one

A wish

Of

Empty philosophers

Ageless prophets

Strong and brutal

Conquerors

And as

I peer

In the

Shadows

Of

The looking

Glass

Being in one

Is within

And if

I seethe its

Reflection

The incomprehensible

Is born

Being

In one

Becomes

Reality

These are the struggles of a poet – a man – a person who is a part of a socially democratic country. A person who seeks to be at peace.

I have become an aging fool who is at peace one day and troubled the next. Scurrying for peace from moment to moment when things are not easy while scampering for easy because easy appears to be peace.

When I think too much about my difficulties they can gather up in a little knot in my belly or in my chest. It is called stress. Sometimes you just have to let it go. Writing tends to help. Other people talk it through. I don't talk very well – matter of fact I write my poems and seldom roam so very far away.

We all have ways of dealing with stress. Some of us call on the muse – seems to be what I do.

The poem you just read, "Reality", is a poem I have been told I didn't write. I was told my hand penned it – the words came through me – but I didn't create it. Notice that it has no punctuation. You must discover how it reads to you yourself.

I believe I have touched on the muse and its whereabouts before. The next poem is another poem I was told I didn't write. Again, I only penned it and the words came through me or so I was told.

Let me share the poem "Time" with you,

Time

But a mere

Increment

To the

Immortals

And aren't

We all

Immortal

Existing for

Eternity

Moment by

Moment

Countless

Immeasurable moments

Consisting of

Timelessness

Philosophically

Or is it

Absolute truth

For Christ

Said

He is the

Beginning

And the

End

Timeless

So can’t we

Set aside

Our differences

For time

Is but

A convenience

And

Let us

Aspire

For a

Better moment

A peaceful

Eternity

For many

Like myself

Believe

Einstein’s dimension

Of

Time

Will end

Thus peace

Will be

Ours

By the

The

Grace of God

For eternity

I, like other poets’, claim ownership of my poems. Perhaps it is my ego that claims ownership of them. Such writings could have gotten me in trouble if I spoke out against a church. I could have been considered a heretic at some point. My thoughts have been pretty messed up at some points in my life. And knowing this I have seen the Grace of misery as I had mentioned earlier in this book.

Let me share with you another poem. This is another contribution to the pot. It is called “The Raven Calls My Name” :

The raven caws to call my name

Is it witchery or am I sane

Superstitious fearing fool

One who knows an empty spool

Wove some yarns the story's told

Understood as pure fool's gold

The magician chants protection spells

To ward off birth of Satan's hells

"Unto others as to you"

The lawyers tell us we must sue

Blessed the brave hearts of the meek

Those who turn the other cheek

A world full of bombs that kill

Supposedly it is God's will

To comprehend I cannot do

Birth and death I know are true

Christ walked on water but to find

He was crucified to save mankind

But still the raven calls my name

Though I've seen wild beast quite tame

The wizard's spell it fell on me

But it is Christ who sets me free.

This is poetry. The pot can accept it or reject it. I know I've touched a few people. Finding a platform is the hard thing. But it can be done. It's not easy, but it can be done.

As I think of a poem that was published in a small-town newspaper, I think of "The Eagle". I penned this poem thinking of the majesty of the eagle. I was satisfied with the finished product. A tourist had read "The Eagle" and wanted to use it for a book that her group was compiling. She had phoned the editor of the paper and asked their permission to use it in the book that her club was putting together.

This editor passed along my number to her as the copyright of the poem belonged to me, and she would need permission from me to print it in their compilation. Since they paid nothing for this poem, it belonged solely to me.

When she called me, she said she wanted to take it back to her group as that year was the year of the eagle for her group. I was kind of shocked that someone would ask permission to use one of my poems, and I really didn't comprehend as to why someone would ask permission to use a poem found in a small-town newspaper. I don't recall if I ever heard anything more about it.

Many people see the power of God, or the power of the Creator, in the eagle.

This is the poem "The Eagle":

Beyond the shadows of the full deep night

A might eagle's born to flight

Upon the dawning vast blue sky

In the cloudless view with a perfect eye

Free to soar a silken path

A bird of prey but not of wrath

She views beyond the ground dew's mist

For Providence instills her nest

High, so high, the highest place

My eyes astonished try to trace

This miracle of breathless awe

Her flight of might bears ne'er a flaw

And I appreciate and praise

Upon an angel I have gazed

How I, the fool, could try to hold

What only God could let unfold

Chapter 9

I think about the effects of ill will on the pot, and I am obligated to write a bit about war. In reality, I am against violence, but I am inclined to entertain a violent thought (for a brief moment) when I feel threatened. This conflict could be the result of ego or fear creating a threat (real or imagined). See, I was young and foolish once and wanted to be a hero.

There are many heroes in this world and many of them have been too busy saving peoples lives and making the world a better place without ever having to turn to violence to do so.

Earlier in this book you read the poem “Hero”. War isn’t all glory. And the soldiers that come home from seeing action – many of them don’t romanticise combat. War is horror story, and it tends to live on and on in one’s mind. Thus, the line “war is hell”.

Making peace without conflict is a war all in itself. It appears we all need to make an enemy with some country, some group, some race, some religion, or some gender just so we can feel superior to the enemy. Are we really that foolish?

Well, yes we are! And we do it more often than we think.

I have heard Canadians put down Americans and Americans put down Canadians. It seems Canada leans towards socialism and Americans lean towards capitalism. Both countries are based on social democracy. We are allies but we are separate entities.

Canada and America. Both of you have a heart and love your neighbours in your own countries. Maybe there won't be the concept of feeling superior to each other in one way or another. Then maybe we can act as countries that love their neighbours.

I can recall hearing stories when I was young about how in some places, if a person was caught stealing, that the powers that be would cut off the thief's hand.

I believe it was during the Gulf conflict that I saw footage of a boy, who appeared to be about 14 years old of Middle Eastern decent, holding an assault rifle in one hand and his other hand was gone.

You might remember that it wasn't proven to the United Nations that Iraq was making a stockpile of weapons of mass destruction. The conflict occurred regardless.

I wrote a poem called "Two Hands"

As the child thief

Whose hand is cruelly cut

From his innocent arm

I scream,

Terror – terror – terror!

Befriend me

Be my brother

And had my laws

Forgiven me

I would have

Two hands

To be civilized

War – war – war!

Its prominence

Petrifies me

For many brave

And innocent

Will fall.

Weapons of

Mass destruction

Are war

And war is

A weapon of

Mass destruction

If peace can fall

Let it rise

And we will

All be the victors

For isn't this

What civilization

Is all about?

As I see  there can be many arguments and disagreements with how I recall history. I won't argue about this poem with anyone. It is my recollection. It is my poetic and symbolic story. It is a piece of my legacy or what little legacy I have that will probably die with me or even before me. It is the winds of melancholy.

Hope - Peace – Love – Kindness – Empathy – Forgiveness are the qualities I believe in. The cracks have begun. Maybe a light will shine in.

The Legacy

I participate in life with the remnance of a major psychosis

And even when well, reality is hard to distinguish from fantasy

But what is fantasy?

Is it not but the dreamers frigate?

The inspiration, the ideal, the dream?

Seeming arrogant and grandiose to many, but simply hope for others,

And I am a man of hope

Dreams, aspirations

Yet cunning and cruel fate can be

A peculiar predicament which puzzles me

Like the great pyramids of Egypt toy with others

And the answer is that stress precipitates

A downpour of chaos and lack of stability

And the winds of melancholy whip the sands of irritability

Into my eyes – blinding me

To bury the dreams

That perhaps one day will be found by another generation

And my legacy of my frigate travels forth

Finally completing the balance of the dream

My hope – called fantasy – becomes the reality of others

As I think of my hopes of peace and non-violent desires, I wonder what will ever become of us. Isn't it the conquerors who conquer the conquerors? I believe Jesus said those who live by the sword will die by the sword. Maybe we should try to be equal to each other and put goodwill, love and peace in the pot. These virtues can grow abundantly for us to share equally with each other.

I will close with a poem "To You"

The romantics are delusional

At least so I've been told

And the metaphysics seem quite mad

They are just a tad too bold

The Holy Books gave birth to laws

Presiding over lands

Conquering the conqueror

Is that our only plan

Will we believe the Golden Rule

And save humanity

Or post upon a world wide web

A cold insanity?

I care not for the fascist

Or the communist made law

But I saw the face of Providence

And was totally left in awe

Yet truly I am puzzled

And I beseech not something new

Will you truly do to others

What you'd want done to you?

Chapter 10

It has been a couple of weeks since I have worked on this book because I had been working on having a different manuscript turned into an e-book to be made available online. It had to do with living with a concurrent disorder and being reasonably happy in the face of adversity. It is called “I’m A Pauper of Misfortune” and it’s about living with a psychiatric condition complicated with substance addiction. It’s about one day at a time living and being reasonably happy.

As I now turn to another look at contributing to the pot, I think about some of the poetry that I wrote for my wife, Brenda. They are humble poems about humble and real love. This poetry is not so much about sparks and butterflies, it’s more about maturing life, hopes and gratitude. This happens in your mid to late 50’s and early 60’s. These poems are the reality of a maturing relationship. It’s nice.

A young woman, a pharmacist, told me that the Brenda poems are cute. She was a bit apprehensive to say that they are cute, for she thought that I might be offended, but I wasn’t. I do wonder, though, if she caught the imagery in these poems. They are alive, real and true.

I played a recording of one at a writers’ group and a woman in the group said that if her husband wrote a poem like the one I had written she would love her husband forever. Maturity sees and hears love in a different light. I cannot remember if the poem I played that day was “Brenda In Spring” or “Brenda In Summer”. I will not workshop these poems, but I do hope that the images in these poems instill the warmth of love in your heart.

This first poem is “Brenda In Spring”:

Her loveliness it paints a smile

I am fulfilled, owned by her eyes

My heart in dance it quivers so

My soul so free it flies, it sighs

And in spring's peace I find it's well

Ten thousand suns a love I see

I try in faith and hope is hope

For love is love thus love will be

And as the maples stretch unbound

With budding green as squirrels climb

She is the pleasure I do seek

The happiness that holds my rhyme

A gentle breath, a mid-day's wish

The fleeing clouds a draft of mirth

My every joy my safe embrace

My midnights calm, my mornings birth.

My mind it works not as before

Though it celebrates the love in we

I watch her beauty simply wow

The man, the heart, the best of me

When Brenda laughs my life is good

All nature stops a bit to rest

For she is dear and life is good

For love is love and I feel blessed

This welcomed season made for love

A precious sight my Brenda is

I think back to the day we wed

The words of hers the words of his

And spring does own our very lives

With the stunning picture it creates

My God I pray that we grow old

Where the best of life and love awaits

And when soft rain does quench the road

She comforts me with words she'll say

She tells me I'm a decent man

I bow my head in need and pray

For life is but a brief, brief walk

The memories that Heaven dreams

My life with her envelops love

And love is life and love redeems

I break in tears for what I can't

A job that gives a living wage

And anger seethes I can't pretend

That I create or I'm a sage

While in this emptiness I weep

Though this will pass, and love will live

I truly hope that I'm enough

Where love is love and love can give

The sentiment that's worth a look

And love is love forever true

Where Brenda is my every kiss

My every old my every new

To whom she prays I must request

In freedom’s bliss oh love recall

A sweet sweet spring a hush insured

And so, in love our hearts did fall

As angels’ happy tears did wash

And flecked our souls with honey drops

When hints of merriment arrived

In harmonies from mountain tops

And this is spring I trust her love

While the bold red cardinal proudly sings

When lovers stroll and Harleys roar

Such sights the tepid weather brings

While quietly I wipe my brow

And watch our cat roll on the grass

Like silent words that find a page

Or spoken verse that comes to pass

While spring embellishes a wish

That I find deep in Brenda’s eyes

A scented breeze that flirts in love

Succinctly through soft clouds which lie

Upon a placid open view

Where love's the only truth in life

And happiness in love is sure

My love, my friend, my dear, dear wife.

So as I fall in sleep tonight

My thoughts will flow and ebb a bit

In wonder of a spring's collage

Where love assures a perfect fit

Like water that can free my thirst

In splendor I do find this day

In joy I will in peace recall

For in my heart this love will stay

O' can the wisest man explain

When life delivers what is new

Why fawns they quickly learn to step

Why robin eggs are coloured blue

Why open hearts search out for love

Proclaiming how they can't resist

A touch in spring that's evermore

The passages of love insist

Her loveliness it paints a smile

I am fulfilled owned by her eyes

My heart in dance it quivers so

My soul so free it flies it sighs

And in spring's peace, I find it's well

Ten thousand suns a love I see

I try in faith and hope is hope

For love is love thus love will be

Thus when we fade away in rest

The spring will come, and it will go

When other loves are true and strong

This lovely season has to show

And Brenda's truly not forgot

She beckons all of nature's peace

For she is love and that's so real

The best of times that cannot cease

Thus quietly I stop this verse

And let this ink be still to dry

I float about the feathered clouds

To touch a truly wondrous sky

For she is love and love is she

She simply opens up a door

To love that flows and grows in spring

And I'll love her forevermore

"Brenda In Spring" was written at the time that our cat had become an outdoor cat, or should I say he became an outdoor cat once again. Before we got Charlie, he was an outdoor cat and he had been trying to get out shortly after he moved into our home.

He had gotten out through a slice in a screen he had made and was discovered hanging at the home where he had originally come from. That was the first summer he was with us. He stayed inside until the winter when he managed to somehow escape out the front door.

It was a bitter cold winter day that he got out, and he went missing for a couple of weeks during a continuing cold spell. He was managing to show to eat food that we had left out for him, but never when we were around.

A friend of ours had a live trap, and we managed to catch Charlie in it. He stayed an indoor cat for the remainder of the winter, but he made a bolt out an open door early that following spring. We didn't chase him but sat outside with him as he ventured around the front yard. When he ventured from the yard, we chose not to try and track him down.

A couple of hours later as I was heading out the door with a sheet to hang on the clothesline, Charlie ventured in on his own. It is six years later, and Charlie now comes and goes whenever he pleases. Thus, the line "And watch our cat roll on the grass…". Is just plain old everyday life.

Following spring came summer and I was inspired to write "Brenda In Summer":

A hushing maple calms the blue

My dreams within my dreams are now

A slight of gray becomes her truth

But could I run I know not how

Nor would I choose to stop this love

O' the silence it would weep in vain

To echo past all that's above

And drive the boldest half insane

O' yes her eyes embrace my soul

And hold me, I'm a conquered man

I have no land nor have I gold

Or need to stop and boast I am

For she is she and loves enough

While Brenda lies with me at night

And she's the breath in joys of love

A wish fulfilled, a blessing's sight

In seconds she's true music's call

A ballad with a love song's touch

And simply truly how I fall

In love in love in love as such

My heart so moved in summer's sun

Forever hers forever hers

Where peace calls out and laughter's from

The comfort that my soul prefers

So deep within the man in me

The beauty screams from in her eyes

And thus, in love she sets me free

I can't explain nor shall I try

And yes, her soul's a silver wind

That brushes clouds across the sky

The belting waves that hit and hit

The feet of craigs a jutted cry

And Jesus is a friend of hers

Who stops the rolling wet at bay

And holds the ocean as it stirs

Thus, quietly I sit and pray

Today my God as rain falls real

Please give her breath and health and hope

O' give her joy, your joy to feel

Your love that's true, Your arms wide ope'

To keep her safe a harboured calm

And gracious dreams the best in me

To live in peace and never fall

And miracles in life to see

That she's your child and so am I

A little bit of us and we

And give me strength to always try

To give her love she'll always see

Kind of humble is my prayer

So simple short and from my heart

And o’ so much, so much I care

I really try and do my part

Though how I know the rain must fall

And every person shall feel pain

But it shall pass as I recall

We let it go or go insane

O’ be soft peace within this time

My God do keep her in your grace

And grow no mountain she can’t climb

Nor lay a path that she must chase

For I am hers, I kneel and cry

My God she is my wife and friend

And give her peace and joy and sky

With every blessing that You send

I the poet some call mad

Believe in hope and love and peace

I’m kind of tired and I’m sad

That wars go on and do not cease

One day I know that they will end

And I and Brenda will give thanks

When people call each other friend

And soldiers can forget their ranks

A hushing maple calms the blue

My dreams within my dreams are now

A slight of gray becomes her truth

Nor could I run I know not how

Nor would I choose to stop this love

O’ the silence it would weep in vain

To echo past all that’s above

And drive the boldest half insane

She is my passion’s loved in love

My heart surrendered moved in dance

That breaks a cage to free a dove

A lover’s dove, a tempting glance

That’s everything that I could wish

And every love I cannot own

And every sigh and every kiss

And every want that’s ever known

A hushing maple calms the blue

My dreams within my dreams are now

A slight of gray becomes her truth

But could I run I know not how

Nor would I choose to stop this love

O’ the silence it would weep in vain

To echo past that’s all above

And frees my soul and makes me sane

O’ Brenda makes the summer bold

And every plant that looks to reach

This summer’s sun that shines so gold

On every wave and every beach

And simply now I have to rest

Thus hear the echo love sets free

And know in truth how I've been blessed

So simply blessed for she loves me

Billions live upon the earth

Billions hope and billions pray

For really peace has so much worth

To live their lives just for this day

And I do smile, as does she

To hold her hand and simply walk

Thus in her thoughts oh want I be

And be I there, o' should I talk.

But talking has no strength in me

I mutter, ramble yes I do

And quiet's good thus carefully

I grab my pen, a page or two

For written words will fall and wane

But magic is the time we spend

For love is true and love is sane

And love will grow for I intend

To hold her close within the day

To lie with her within the night

To hush her storms and always pray

Forever she will have the sight

To see her Lord her God and love

And also me, a humble man

For was this hope e'er born above

With footprints etched in golden sand

O' she belongs to world peace

And nature's pleasant happiness

Or God's good love that He sets free

The hope we feel togetherness

And future's music yet unfound

Which lovers hear before it's made

For love can't help but be the sound

From sparkling streams where lovers wade

The satisfaction of the night

In shadows being safe and sure

The warm embrace when truth is right

Which lays me down where love endures

My God poetic sighs unveil

The simplicity of love gives birth

And images of love reveal

The souls of love have much more worth

Than poets say or sculptors carve

We simply set each other free

And feed each other lest we starve

To see the love and good in we

I've read a book or two on love

A man in love who feared and dreamt

To be with her and always prove

Like days of old that came and went

When Heathcliff came to Catherine's room

In love so much like rocks beneath

O' not the foliage in the woods

Eternal rocks that cannot cease

O’ be the stars forevermore

And be love found in every step

Thus be her footage always sure

And let this love have endless depth

So let her smile let her laugh

In moved embrace no laboured breath

And be love hers to never pass

Thus let her life be always blessed

As I repeat my words and rhymes

For I’m a simple humble man

A poet born from modest times

I do the best, the best I can

I’ve placed my love within a poem

And gently rest my modest pen

A simple craft the muse my own

With every love that I could send

And thus the muse inside me stops

To be inside from whence it came

To every love I'll never own

And every love where love is sane

So now I have shared with you the spring and summer of Brenda's poems. They're just down to earth poems. The love of friendship and partnership. The marriage poems. The poems of growing a bit.

From when I was young until this day, I have found love is what makes life worthwhile and love in this day is love that is real. Love is an innocence that I found I didn't truly understand until I was in my late 50s.

Now that I have entered my 60s, I am learning that love is inclusive. Brenda is my wife, my partner, and my friend, and that is an exclusive love we share. There are a few other people in our lives - family, friends, and such. That is the way it is supposed to be.

Jesus said for us to love our neighbours as ourselves.

"Than poets say or sculptors carve

We simply set each other free

And feed each other lest we starve

To see the love and good in we"

I used to think that symbiotic relationships were simply superficial relationships, and perhaps I sort of still feel like that, but reality tells me today that we feed the hungry and help the poor because that is what we are to do. It is doing unto others what we would want done unto ourselves. That is love.

And the dreamers, the philosophers, and the lovers have been telling us this all along. This is something good that Brenda brings out in me. I kind of think I have learned this a bit late in life. I knew about love but I think I was afraid of it. It's not all glamour.

The next poem that I am going to share with you is "Brenda In Autumn":

So good be it as years go by

And be each day a joy embraced

A soft breath's kiss, an autumn's want

The crisp morn's frost of beauty laced

With love and need a thirst is born

And torn in love her love so heals

Her prettiness and smile so taunt

So truly blessed, so blessed I feel

I cannot own nor should I try

To steal her heart to call my own

But I do love her every hope

For autumn's peace and leaves of gold

Her green soft eyes be fun to see

They simply shine such soothing sights

When we embrace I’m moved in love

And welcome so our autumn nights

So she is autumn born to be

Such loveliness forever sure

She’s happiness and gentleness

And sweet and kind and all that’s pure

The hope of hope of hope that’s rest

My wife and friend the love I find

The autumn sun the autumn moon

So good be it as years unwind

The weather’s nip a bit more is

It comes within an age this time

And thus our home grows cozy warm

So comes from me this autumn rhyme

Thanksgivings are and spirits rise

The smell of leather whiff the air

While baseball crowns its champions

And hockey’s starting everywhere

The wind in gust so sprinkles leaves

Like confetti hesitating down

In acid flashbacks' flickered awe

A rushing swooshing autumn sound

While poets gaze in awe be they

As busy people stop to see

The painted seas of coloured leaves

And I see her and she sees me

And autumn's but a memory

Of summer's sun born in her soul

Like innocence of lead guitars

On the river Styx I pay the toll

O' God o' God o' bless her full

In the paradise she seeks with Christ

While I a mad, mad poet weep

In shadows black so black and bright

The black so black in autumn's lit

With autumn’s stars and moons and love

On a carved stone throne a spectre sits

By fires orange and white bear rugs

This quiet ghost shall wave a staff

That belonged to Moses once a time

But its wrath had died, and love was born

Yet no-one could identify

With ancient times for they had left

They left few marks upon the earth

But I’ve been held in Brenda’s arms

And I am touched with autumn’s mirth.

Rest is rest though calm is fierce

And autumn slumbers in the cold

For winter’s spirit heart will pierce

While autumn sees her hand but folds

I turn to Brenda, take her hand

And see how frail a man am I

How love is love I understand

For love is love and that is why

For autumn as all seasons come

And like all seasons it will go

For she is she and she is love

And love and happiness I know

For she has loved me in this life

Thus, blessed was I in Brenda's arms

For God I ask you, bless my wife

And keep her free from all life's harms

Please Jesus keep her in your heart

In a world that I might never know

And be with her in paradise

To be with her to where she goes

O' I recall when I was young

And truly not so old am I

And autumn whispers soft to me

I am content a love-struck sigh

Thus, I question not her love for me

When emotions toss about sometimes

I love her more, I love her more

So close to heaven I have climbed

And humbly so I turn to God

My simple pen can't truly say

So grateful for her love am I

To touch her hand to live this day

And thus my paper I will fold

Then hear the click to stop my pen

And once again I know I'm blessed

No matter where, no matter when

So I take a draught of autumn air

Knowing winter soon shall be

Then trust that Brenda's simply love

And joyful hope's tranquility

So I humbly bow my head in thanks

For God's given grace I don't deserve

These autumns when we so embrace

This simple love I so prefer

So one more click shall stop my pen

And end my words upon this page

My paper folds, my pen's at rest

To love, to be, to live this day.

As you can see these poems are not short and witty like other poems that poets write. They are little rhyming stories that are meant to be listened to as well as read alone.

I believe my reading ability prevents me from enjoying the true effect of a poem, but there are times, when someone reads a poem to me, I just can't help being moved by the sound of the spoken poetic voice.

I know my writing abilities are humble and I know this. In all reality though, I know I write decent poems, and in my humility, I know I have written some good poems too.

The Brenda poems, which I hope you have found some enjoyment in, are another contribution to the pot.

This is my reality.

Epilogue

As I look at these thoughts, these observations and this work, I see that society and survival are based on the systems of meritocracy and power. If your skills are marketable you are rewarded in currency, and currency provides one with power. Those with power usually unite with others with power, and in doing so they control the balance of power. This is the development of social economic classes.

If you don't believe this, try and buy a $60,000 automobile off the show room with a credit limit of $5,000. It just won't happen. A decent salesperson might try to get you a deal on an older model vehicle within your price range, if there is one in the lot, but remember they need to get their fair share of your currency to make a living. The salesperson you are talking to might even direct you to someone else with a vehicle in your price range because they know you will get a better deal.

Then there is the complication of having a maxed-out credit limit. Then how do you pay for maintenance and repairs?

The only way I can see around this is an overhaul in communities. Nobody should have to live below the poverty line, and community should see to this. There are many such communities formed in social democracies all over the world. No-one should have to live without the necessities of life.

We all need to do what we can to help each other and ourselves. Education is important. Not exclusive education but inclusive education. This is the ideology of doing unto others what we would want others to do unto us. I heard it from Jesus, but I do believe other religions have a similar ideology. Some people try and get around inclusivity by dehumanizing people and groups of people.

I have been given much grace from the communities that I have turned to in my life. Also, I have been put down for the difficulties of living with a disability and needing financial aid. And you know what? The sad thing is that there are times I feel shame for what I do to survive. Do you think this is ok?

Social democracy and community are happening all over the world. People are concerned about other people. People want the load to be shared even though they know it can be difficult. The wealthiest should share the ridiculous wealth that they have.

Many of us have humble desires and do not want to take from anyone. There is the reality that some of us have poor marketable abilities according to some-screwed up system of meritocracy.

I am thinking it is a good thing to feed the hungry, heal the sick, and end suffering. Big business and government can only do so much.

In humility I can say that I need help. I know that others need help and others want to help. And most people do what they can to contribute to the pot. And in humility I hope this book is a modest contribution to the pot.

During my 40 years or so of writing, I have discovered that the more love you put in the pot, the more love you get to take out. I can tell you the journey is desired more and more every day. It's not perfect but you realize that love is life, and love redeems. It's more than simple reasoning. It's a gift.

I dropped my pen today

Such a plastic click

On a cold, cold kitchen floor

I recalled such empty times

a harsh and painful place

Clawing, grasping,

praying to be ransomed

from life and its unforgiving loneliness

Yet my pen was bold

to right my world

your world, our world

and the chaos on the evening news

Thus, I reach and hold my pen

with the gathered paper I embrace

for love is kind, it is not pain.

And these gentle times are quite suffice

like a sunny day's soft whispered kiss

thus, what I forge are words, just words

for I will be and still I am

the lover's hope the soldier's peace

and the rhymes that little children say

I dropped my pen today

such a plastic click

on a cold, cold kitchen floor

Thank you.

Paul Dupuis