

POEMS OF THE WEEK

WEEK 5 (January/February)

1. Credo Ut Intelligam
2. Demons Within, The
3. Did I see Me?
4. Drop in Eternity, A
5. Greers Road is Busy

POEMS OF THE WEEK

WEEK 6 (February)

1. Bitch has to Go, The
2. Day I die, The
3. I saw you today
4. World-famous poet

1.

CREDO UT INTELLIGAM¹

“I believe” is an equal opportunity phrase,
there is no rank or privilege on this mortal coil
turning and travelling through time and space.

It is a right born of existence. Beyond your control.

Do not proclaim your belief as a right to command or impose.
Speak not of Royal Decree, personal illumination from beyond.
The threat of force is the threat of force. Threats are threats,

lies are lies, even dressed in smiles and misinformation.

Quote as you might your books, your texts diligently learned;

they are not marks of merit, however assiduously earned.

Start an argument if you wish; assert your beliefs with conviction.

State your case, and stick to the issue. I advise you, beware!

Tell me no lies, no matter how small; no cynical self-serving abuse
of the language I so value; twist and turn it at your own peril. It will not be insulted;
it carries in its syntax the blood and sweat of too many writers and poets.
In the end, you, your falsehoods and poisoned rhetoric will be exposed.

We argue, debate or disagree; this is the nature of those who are free.

The issues will be neither old nor new, whatever your current view.

It is an eternal quest for understanding how that structure there is chaos,
and how structure can be born out of chaos. How can being and nonbeing co-exist?

So my enemy, my friend, my fellow human being; let's call a brief respite, a truce.

Meet in this place, to converse and consider a hypothesis, it goes like this:

“We fight and squabble, reach out and connect; are caught in History's flow.”

Choose your beverage, take a seat; let's see where the conversation goes.

Leslie Bush

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1. The title, “credo ut intelligam” is the Latin translation of “I believe in order to understand”.

2.

THE DEMONS WITHIN

1.

The gate had not been breached.

A shot had not been fired.

They still got in,

The defences had retired.

They were welcomed in:

Carried and pulled, Trojan Horse.

The plan had worked.

Events would take their course.

They were welcomed in

The demons did hide
Inside this wooden monstrosity
so comfortably wide.

The crowds they did cheer
drowning in beer, the priests prayed
The King commanded
Souvenirs were available, on display

2.

Were they so complacent,
so self-secure?
How could they not see?
Did they really think
they could be free

of the lurking terror,
the niggling doubt;
surely they should know,
surely they should shout

“No, no”, don’t let them in.

Leave us, leave us

to enjoy our sin.

“No, no”, don’t let them in.

Inside this thing immobile
that filled a space, they waited
until some other vacuous idol
took its place.

3.

It was in the evening

the Demons struck -

the half-light between

day and night,

when the body was tired,

(not quite ready for sleep).

parents, their promises

to their children, would keep.

They struck with ruthless precision
as only they could;
killing and destroying
without mercy (as if they should).

With malicious joy and intent
they had a spree;
shrieking and laughing,
they slaughtered with glee.

They shouted as they went,
come one and come all;
we are here and
death is free.

4.

Dawn broke over a shattered city.
Trojan horse, empty stood, unconcerned
Whilst all around it
everything burned.

IN THE end, there was silence
that nothing can break;
be so careful of what
we might forsake.

IN THE END, the silence reigns;
No freaking prayers,
no empty speeches,
no sodding souvenirs.

Leslie Bush

7 March 2013

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3.

DID I SEE ME?

Let me talk of forgiveness.
Not the touchy-feely kind;
plastic smile, insincere hug, hard eyes.

I'm talking about pain and anger that resides so deep
that it seethes and slivers through every breath,
every waking moment, every thought;
that stalks and ravages the troubled sleep.

The terror and anger constrict each breath,
each threatening teardrop; that stops just short
of the voice from calling, screaming out, "Stop! Enough!"

Let's talk of the love between a father and a son,
the kind that is supposed to be unconditional;
to last a lifetime. Why is it so hard-edged
A son, who is disturbed, medically diagnosed,

Who has threatened, manipulated and assaulted;
a step away from arrest. I chose physical distance
From him, as the best defence. He came to visit
Unannounced: my partner was not happy,

They have a history of discontent

I welcomed him, cautiously

(he came in peace. I pointed to a table outside.

We made a coffee, rolled a smoke,

and sat outside in the cool evening breeze.

“To what do we owe the pleasure?”, I enquire.

“I just wanted to talk to you, you are my father”

No dispute there. I am. I sat and I listened.

I looked into his eyes, and heard his voice.

There he was: this person I knew as a child, a comforter,

and an angry aggressor, in turn. My, he has grown.

“I will be 25 soon”, he said; “Yes”, I replied.

I looked at him. Such a lonely, vulnerable soul I saw.

“There are lots of people still very angry with you”,

I said, “Yes.”, He continued, “I would do all that I could to change that.”

We sat in silence for a moment

He asks of his brother, whom he has not seen for months.

They do not talk. His brother wants nothing to do with him.

I looked at him, and I listened. Such a lonely, vulnerable soul I saw.

Like a mirror, did I see myself? Twenty-five, and lost; lacking direction,

feeling like a bag of ... shivers, this is not nice!

I looked at my son; I saw a sad and lonely man.

So many barriers that needed to broke through

I thought, "Let me talk of forgiveness:

Of things he or I had done, has said, had screamed

And realised it is not a luxury, not a whim", and then,

"No! Let me NOT talk of forgiveness. It's not enough,

not enough for him, not enough for me."

The verbs are active! Listen! Accept! Forgive!

Do it! Make it so. It's all aspirational!

I'm working on it, bit by bit,

learning when to bend, and when to stand firm.

It takes days, months, and years; it does not stop

The hard truth is, I'm angry: with him, myself;

I empathise with what I imagine he is going through.

I have to learn to separate the "him" from "me"

Leslie Bush

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(Revised 2 February 2023)

4.

A DROP IN ETERNITY

It never happened.

It's only a dream,
a nightmare. I will wake up,
and stifle a scream.

27 years is a drop in eternity.

It's nearly half my life:
to live with a woman;
a friend, a lover, a wife.

She came, she saw,
she conquered; asked for a light,
accused me of cradle snatching.

Oh, what a night.

'Twas the end of an era;
the beginning of a new.

We will live forever,
if only we knew.

She died in pain,
strong and unrepentant;
she lived her life on the edge,
always impatient.

Live for the moment.
Carpe Deum! Seize the day!
Memories are memories.
What more can I say?

It never happened?
It's only a dream,
a nightmare? Bereaved?
You might know what I mean.

Leslie Bush

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5.

GREERS ROAD IS BUSY

The weather is dull and grey, threatened by a persistent drizzle;

I sit on the porch: drinking coffee, and smoking a cigarette.

Greers Road is busy, a much-used thoroughfare: it's noisy.

Here I sit, back again in a broken city; resilient, determined to rebuild.

It was 35 years ago, I fled this place; abandoned family,

head held low, feeling disgraced. Went to Auckland, start a new life,

found adventure, and lost a wife. Continued my liaison with she who must be obeyed;

only to part some years later: bills to be paid, reality rules.

Played the game, assumed the part; donned the mask,

and put on a suit and tie. It worked for some years; flashing moments of despair,

lonely walks in the dark: why must reality be so stark?

Fell in love, married; how the decades pass.

Played private enterprise, learned from mistakes;

how many times, and how much effort does it take?

Dreamed big dreams, stalked grand ambition;
to find what? Miracles are suffocated by tradition?

I do not weep, I do not mourn; long gone is the question, why was I born?

Decades pass and death and divorce take their toll; let the dice roll.

My mother is dead, to my family I am a stranger.

My sons are maturing; I trust they will not face the danger

of paralysing self-doubt, vicious voices in the head,

taunting cruelly, would you be better off dead?

Times, they have changed; things remain the same.

All that is deemed "new", is only a change of name.

I shall not wax philosophical; that is not my aim.

I am back home; in a city in disrepair. This time is different.

It is not a matter of despair, not a place to wait out the years.

I have done my time, not necessarily with reason or rhyme.

Here I write poetry, stare at a screen; consort with the gods

of creativity, a global family without peer.

The weather is dull and grey; Greers Road is busy.

I am home. Neither I nor Christchurch will disappear.

Leslie Bush

10 April 2014

POEMS OF THE WEEK WEEK 6 (February)

1. Bitch has to Go, The
2. Day I die, The
3. I saw you today
4. World-famous poet

1

THE BITCH HAS TO GO

“The Bitch has to go!”

You angrily proclaim.

“The Bitch **MUST** go,

only one of us must remain.”

“The Bitch (as you so phrase) stays!”,

Dear wife, I angrily say.

“That Bitch, my Mistress

has long helped me out of my malaise.”

During those long dark days,

when 20, I turned, She was there
to spur me on, to better,
to persevere.

There, during those long lonely walks
in an uncaring city, on feet of clay
laden with self-doubt and despair,
She was there to show me the way.

On the bridge over the river Avon,
as I peered hopelessly at the shallow
water below me; 'stop your cravin"
She sternly said. "Mellow, man, mellow!"

On dark lonely nights
when give up I might,
She whispered in my ear,
"come hither, come here!"
She lead me to the lights,
burning bright: row upon row,
mounted high above: just waiting,
waiting to light up and glow.

The stage on which I strode,
lifted my head high, raised my voice:
I am here, I am who you want me to be.
Here, under this proscenium arch, I am free.

The makeup, the costumes,
learning all those lines; let us resume,
“Stand here, speak, move now, turn,
feel the passion, let it burn

from deep inside, I want it REAL!
I want to hear you, reach out and touch you
from afar, feel you beside me, inside me,
confide in me, reside for a special moment beside me.”

Oh, how I loved her, she loved me;
spurned, encourages and caressed me
in my moments of panic: “repeat it, breathe,
your words are weapons, tinkling bells to bind me

to your creation, your time in the lights:
work with me, don't fight me,
I am your friend, your only friend
here in the half-light, this delicate mystery.”

I was young, I was old;
I was whatever I was told
to be: English, Kiwi or somewhere
on an island, a boatman

I was enthralled, besotted,
bound and absorbed to her touch.

“You aren’t here to play,
I want it all, I want it now. Is that too much?

Feel it deep inside,
learn to take me astride
to a world of wonder;
be it soft, be it thunder.

Feel it deep inside;
make me feel it too.

Standing up, lying down -
shake that which I stand on, the ground.

I am here to be pleased,
not merely appeased;
I paid my money, I want

what I want: here, now, with passion.

Open your mouth, loosen your tongue,
breath, art-ic-u-late! Let me feel your words
reverberate through my being. Faster, slower,
do it again. I didn't come here for solitary pleasure.

I want to feel your performance,
from the top of my head to the tips of my toes;

do not break the thread that binds:

do not loosen me from the throes

of your passion, that only you can provide:

again, again: take me on a cosmic carpet ride.

For this brief moment in eternity, take my life
and enhance it in shades of a new reality. I will decide

whether you were successful and worthy of doing it again

night after night (for a specified time);

whether you have the reason or rhyme

to be worthy of my patronage."

Night after night, in that magic space,

delight after delight, none could replace;

begone, the tyranny of the mundane,
that was another time, another place.

We parted; 'tis sad but true, after eleven years,
and one failed marriage; She was there first,
She was there last, holding my hand;
holding me fast: a refuge, a draught to satiate my thirst.

We parted, nonetheless; maybe She wanted new blood.

Have you guessed Her name, what is her Fame?

You might call Her, Theatre; I embraced her as Life.

She is too untamed, wild and free: exuberant and exultant; nobody's wife.

It has been many years, we have been apart;
but still, I can her voice: "again, again; feel the pain,
express the joy - make it real; this is not just a part,
it is life (in the Theatre); no pain, baby, no gain"

Have I been unfaithful to Her? Possibly,

I have met, and been entranced by, one of her sisters. I call her Poetry;

She calls me to type poems at 2 am in the morning,
and abandons me without warning.

The Bitch must go!

No way!
The Bitch, I fear for you,
is here to stay.

Leslie D. Bush

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2

THE DAY I DIE

(Variations on a Theme in 5 parts)

** 1 **

THE DAY I DIE will, like the day I was born, be like any other:
on the edge of an abyss, looking into the face of oblivion;
buoyed by a cautious and fragile optimism;
anchored by the remains of sins past.

Held back by too many yesterdays unlived;
too many "Thank You's ungiven
looking into the jaws of a tomorrow
that is undisclosed and indecipherable.

Somewhere, the sun will be shining;
someone will be laughing, someone will be crying;
somewhere there will be darkness,
somewhere there will be light.

The day I die will be like any other:
complete with the soundtrack (roll tape!),
somewhere, in the corner of my mind,
I will hear Frank Croon, "I Did It my Way.

** 2 **

THE DAY I DIE will be like any other:
balanced on the edge;
restrained by too many yesterdays;
buoyed by a fragile optimism,
anchored by a stubborn (even vainglorious)
determination to prevail (despite the Odds);
staring into the imposter's mask of tomorrow,
a mystery, a riddle; demanding a response.

** 3 **

THE DAY I DIE, the battle for humanity's
soul, heart and mind will continue, unabated;
the Righteous will trumpet their revelation
(their "undisputable truth");
those who question will be scorned and mocked;
the complement of all that it is to be human
will be reduced to a truism and headline banners:
(so glib and sensational) - sells papers,
sells those casually, cynical "bytes" that so many -
even in an "advanced, educated" society fall for
(Plato, Socrates, Newton - who?);
damn the substance, sentiment rules. OK?

** 4 **

The Day I Die will be like any other:
drenched in blood, etched with pain,
ringing with the rage of the Righteous;
festooned with a positive attitude, inspirational quotes
as a promised panacea to all evils.

With too many yesterdays unlived,
confronted by too many tomorrows undiscovered.

** 5 **

THE DAY I DIE will come (sing no sad songs).
The Book of Life will not close, a semi-colon perhaps
might be added to the long and winding
sentence that began with "He"

Another quantum of particulate matter and energy
will quietly fuse and be at one with the cosmos.
There will be no yesterday, today or tomorrow
- simply infinity, an eternal now.

The illusion of Time, and memories of Who or What was,
the division of time into past, present and future
will be the legacy of the living;
(roll tape, turn up loud!)

"I'll stand right here
before the Lord of Song'
with nothing, nothing on my lips
but Hallelujah!"

Thank you, Leonard.

Leslie D. Bush

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3

I SAW YOU TODAY

I saw you today, as if for the first time;

I heard someone else's voice

come from your lips, Your penumbra

looked darker, faint echoes stirred the air.

The presence of another intruded, strutted proudly,

then retreated. I heard someone else:

your mother, father, sister or brother;

love long lost, a departed lover.

I heard echoes of arguments long unresolved.

You looked at me; your eyes were not your own.
They berated me, scorned and scorched me;
stripped me bare. Am I yours to disown?

I have seen you, young and vibrant;
no dark cloud. You held my hand, lead me to your bed;
impassioned embrace, a simmering heat expands;
proud and erect, you could say I made my stand.

In the morning light, what did we say?
"Hello, did you sleep well?" You smiled.
Why now do I see your brow creased,
has some sacred memory been defiled?

You look at me as a stranger,
I hear another's voice. You look at me in wonder,
as if, "have I made the right choice?"
You speak of things that haunt you,

that will not let you sleep, bind you:
shadows of a dark keep. Shards of pain
bite deep, sharp and diamond-hard.

You are lost for the moment. Let me help you regain

the path to the light; it is your right.

Is it not the mystery of living that deep inside,
the product of tradition, DNA, and chance
there are too many lives to take in at one glance?

Lives, real or imagined, from which to hide;
so many voices demanding, ever ready to chide;
we are a product of the ages, aware or not;
layer upon layer of consciousness and meaning.

I've seen your face before; I will see it many times again.
It will not be the same; the difference might lie in your eyes,
the tilt of your chin, the shy smile, a wondrous grin.
We fight a battle of sorts; one we can never win.

Pause for a moment, take a deep breath, open your eyes,
hold my hand; say "look at me": I will. Locked in silence,
our eyes connect; no need for words, no need for pretence.

Embrace the present. Perfection be damned, etiquette an encumbrance;

we try, struggle, and sometimes we win. Where there is an obstacle,
there is also a place to begin. The spectres are patient, ruthless,
and will not retreat. Here, together, we create our own legend,
write poems in the sand, and sing our own song.

I saw you today, as if for the first time;
I found melody, a sweet sound; asked for neither reason nor rhyme.
We spoke of ghosts, voices in the dark; demons that dwell in the night.
They can stay there. We are lost in each other's sight.

Leslie D. Bush

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4

WORLD FAMOUS POET

I am vain, arrogant and proud; I am a world-famous poet;
these are my virtues, my vices I will not expound.
You can find me on Google. Yes, I know it.
I checked on whether I could be found.

I cling to the edge of the world, furthestmost south;
any further is totally ice. For an introduction, would that suffice?
Academic prowess I have little; an eternal student, have been from my youth,
from the school of hard knocks. Would have been nice
to have followed another path. I am of a generation that learned as it went;
hard work, take the risk and place an investment. Roll the dice; see them fall.
Laugh or cry, it matters not; things do not happen for our entertainment.
Life is a process that makes its own rules; it does not function to be in our thrall.

I cannot speak with wisdom of the works of the great poets,
I have dabbled in philosophy; feasted on 20th Century English novels
Written by John Fowles, Le Carre and Deighton; a side dish of Burgess
(a clockwork orange anyone?).

Had a brief flirtation with the Romantic poets
struggled with their length;
luxuriated in their use of language and imagery.

So call me stupid, call me mad; I live in my deception.
Plumb memories; mix it with doses of jagged learning;
pour it out on paper. To bore or offend is not my intention.

Were I vain, I might say, "I write for the discerning ".

The reader rules choose what survives;

what to let go; what to revive.

Be it folly, be it not,

I live or die on your praise.

If you are still with me, having reached this length,

I humbly thank you, for giving me strength.

Be it true, be it false;

I stand among my peers, a poet?

Leslie D. Bush

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