

Poetry Series

Mike Tonkin
- poems -

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Mike Tonkin(16/05/33)

I am 74, and in 1998 had a stroke and my right side is paralysed. I lived in Cornwall, England until I was nineteen then I went to London and trained to be a Dentist, I then worked in London for thirty years before retiring and returning to Cornwall. My poetry is mainly about the things that I experienced and I am writing it to let people know that there can be a good life after a stroke. Some verse was written in the sixties, the rest in the last seven years.

A Little Bit More

I remember you,
Oh yes, I remember you
Well.

You had on a
Cashmere shawl
That sat well
With you,
So lazy and casual
It made you
Loveable,
And when your face
Came up to be
Kissed
I saw your neck
Stretched,
And I loved you
A little bit,

You were delightfully
Shy
You wouldn't look
At me
Until with both hands
I cupped your fragile
Face
And made you look,
And then you
Kissed me
So gently,
With such feeling,
That I loved you
A little bit more.

You fitted
Along the
Length of me,
You belonged
At my side
And you were

Everything to me
And I tasted you.
So much
Woman,
So much,
That I loved you
A little bit more.

I only knew that
I did not want
To let you go,
So we loved
With the smell of the
Land close around
Us
And with the heat
Of the day upon
Us
And the air so full
Of promise,
That we both felt
We could stop breathing
And still live,
So I loved you
A little bit more.

The day was not
Endless
As we thought,
And so with evening
Beside us
We walked
Away
From that place,
Slowly,
We had lived a little,
So I loved you
A little bit more.

Mike Tonkin

A Look, Two Eyes

A look. Two eyes
Filled with yearning.
A look. Two eyes
Gently burning
Into mine.
Such warmth,
Such tenderness
Was in those eyes,
it was as if the trembling sky
Looked on me.
A look. Two eyes
Searching and discerning in mine
A gaze returning, the tenderness
And lit with such intensity
As to make her tremble like the sky.
A look. Two eyes.
Holding my world,
Causing me to unfold
From within myself
And pour out through my eyes
My love for her.

Mike Tonkin

Aberfan

On 21st of October 1966 a tip of coal slurry slid
Into the village of Aberfan and 144 people were
Killed.

Of these 116 were children who were buried
Beneath their school Pantglas Junior School.

They lie so close together now
Out there on the quiet hill
While the valley is weeping in the mist
For the mountains dreadful toll.

Their trusting eyes are closed now
Crushed by the indifference of men
And their still hearts burst with pity
For those that stand and mourn.

Mike Tonkin

Adrian Henri, Poet.

I was suddenly aware
of a new voice
speaking to me.
The voice of a poet
speaking words
that leaped out
of the page
and made
me listen,
to a story
of love.
Such simple words, .
such a simple story,
such simple poetry, .
but it made the
hairs of my neck
stand up
as if to applaud
the words that he
spoke..
His visual
Imagination
Was electric,
The air around him
Was alive
With static.

He is no longer
With us,
but when I read
his poetry
I can share with him
The joy
of his imagination
and his words
that tell of the world
he loved..

Beach Of Dreams

The tide was half in,
and we were cut off,
cut off from everywhere
my mother and I.
A stretch of bright virgin sand,
and on that yellow canvas
I lived my waking dreams.
A pirate band,
a shipwrecked crew,
a land of sand and desperate
heat, and
armies at my beck and call.
When I tired of these there.
were caves, caves
as dark as hell, and
pools, as deep as the
Midnight angelus
Small fish became sharks and
Sea Horses were magical
mounts that carried you
to nirvana.
We built dams to rival
the mighty Boulder,
and played cricket to make
England proud of us.
We clambered up onto the
cliffs my mother and I,
and stood where miners
stood, and in my minds
eye we walked out under the
sea and heard rocks crashing
in the turbulent tide above our
heads, and if I closed my eyes
I could see men drowning
in the cause of tin.
There is a place there,
a natural place,
where two people can sit
and talk.

I learned something of the
art of conversation,
and when it was best to
be silent and just look
around me.

I learned so much from
my mother
about this land of wreckers,
fishing fleets, miners and
men who tilled the soil.
It was an exiting world,

Mike Tonkin

Bodmin Moor

The moor is at it's best
In autumn, with the air
Full of moisture, the place
Closed in
And melancholy.
One feels a sadness
That summer is over, .
But the season is rich
With the vivid colours
Of dying vegetation,
Colours that give you
Hope, for the future
Breathe them.
Bushy lichins and
Ferns grow
In secret places,
The Marsh Fritillary
Flies,
Rivers are clean
And Dippers live
Dangerously
Looking for food
In the fast flowing
Streams,
And Skylarks sing.
Flat rocks piled
One on the other
Precariously
And rocking stones
In balance with the
Universe,
Granite that impervious
Stone
Used for buildings
Tombs and crosses
And mans memorials
To himself.
He has walked
The moors

For thousands of years,
Tin and copper
And white china clay
Have been dug,
Woolly Mammoths
And reindeer have
Roamed the land.
But the people
Are gone now,
Cattle, sheep and ponies
Remain, and the moors
Are themselves
Healing the scars
Left by man.
Brown Willy,
You sit up on
The tops for hours
Just watching
The reflection of the
Earth in the sky, .
When evening draws
In, and darkness wraps itself
Around you, the cry
Of a curlew sounds like
The loneliest, the most
Beautiful utterance on
Earth.

Mike Tonkin

By The Way Her Name Was Mathilde

Nineteen hundred and fifty,
There were a lot of girls
Out on the town then,
I was seventeen and
Ready for anything.
I was told to be sensible,
Told to be careful but
I knew it all.
I was one of the lads,
One of the boys
That would make the
World sit up and
Take notice.
I strutted like a peacock
I was not as courtly
As that flashy young bird
And my bravado was
Very thin on my sleeve.
I talked to them on
On street corners
Eyed their shapely legs.
They laughed, the sound
Ringing in my ears like
Musical drops of rain
On a Saturday evening.
And then all at once
There she was,
Wishing she was
With someone, and I
Without a thought went
Up to her and took her
Hand and brushed it
Lightly with my lips.
She laughed then
And I laughed too
Her hand trembled like a
Young animal in mine
I whispered in her ear
"Will you walk with me"

And she nodded
So we left the crowd
And floated down the
Street on gossamer
She was sixteen wanting
To be a woman and
I told her
That she could be
Anything she wanted
She kissed me
On the cheek then
And became a woman
We loved each other
For six months
And then parted for
Pastures new.
By the way
Her name was Mathilde

Mike Tonkin

Divorce.

She walked away from me
Not looking at me
Taking no notice of me
Glad to be leaving, .
She didn't say goodbye.

The end
Of a marriage.
It had been dead
For years.
I sat in an armchair,
The children in bed,
And I wept..
Damn her,
Damn her to hell.....
I wept for the defeat,
I wept for the wasted years
I wept for being alone.

Life was chaotic,
Slowly I got used to,
The housework,
Taking the children
To school,
The cooking,
That was a laugh! !

.
We went to
Ireland
For a holiday,
The boy caught his
First fish,
His face was a picture,
The girl became fascinated
By the graveyards,
The photographs of the
Occupants
Stuck to the gravestones
For some reason

Made her laugh..
I slowly fell in love
With the place.
The people always smiling
And talking as if they
Really knew you.

At last it was over, , .
The divorce.

.

Mike Tonkin

For Ever

I wonder sometimes
If life Is worth living.
I feel drained
With hardly any
Life left in me
At times, I feel
That giving up
Is what I should do,
To go for that
Long sleep,
Oh that
Long sleep
For ever.
But it is the thought of that
Long sleep
For ever
That frightens me,
Forever is such
A long time.

Mike Tonkin

Galleons Sailing Across The Sky

Wallowing in memories
Memories of childhood.
Places and times
Of no importance to
Anyone
But myself.
It was always summer
And summer days
Were always warm,
Day after day
There were white
Galleons sailing across
The sky
On their peaceful mission
To nowhere,
Idyllic days,
Endless days
That seemed to
Go on forever.
Exploring the country
Around the town
On my bike
With Sam,
A Highland Terrier
At my heel,
I chatted with him
Incessantly
And he listened
Storing away the names
Of places
That fell from my lips,
It was enough world
For any youngster.
To learn the ways of
Animals, and birds
The hours spent lying
In the long grass
Watching a vixen
With her cubs.

Down by the old
Railway line
Watching the
Permanent Way
Gang
Making the track
Good.
The day I found
Old Kea church,
A tiny church
That fascinated me
Meeting Punt, a hobo,
And slowly becoming his friend.
The Irishman was a born
Raconteur
And he wove
For me stories
That captivated me,
I fell in love
With the human voice then
And poetry
Started me on a journey
That has never ended.
Creeping into the
Cathedral
Not sure if I were allowed
And marvelling that it
Stood
And reading the plaques
Of the dead
The great and good
Of this world.
Idless woods
The site of a hillfort,
Which took me back
To the Iron Age
And gave my young mind
A playground for
My thoughts.
Trennick, Trelissick,
Polwhele, Polperrow
Penweathers and Penelewey

The Tre, Pol and Pen
Of Cornwall
Were a part of the very
Fabric of me,
This was my arena
And I knew it
Like the back
Of my hand
It was a time
When we learned about
Our place in the world,
It was a place of
Wonders
And a place that
Was above all
Part of me.
Childhood, a magic
Time of discovery.

Mike Tonkin

God's Away

Gods away.
No. sorry
Don't know when he'll be back.
A war.
You've been attacked,
Thats awkward.
Napalm.
People dying.
What about the bomb?
No. Whats the fuss then.
How thoughtless people are
Bothering us with little wars.
Come back in a decade or two.
Urgent you say,
But I've already told you
Gods away..

Mike Tonkin

Horses Of The Fields

They have been fed and watered,
And are ready for work.
They stand patiently
And wait for the day to begin.
They know the ploughman's step,
Their heads turn,
Eyes follow him and see
The sugar in his hand, they
Snuffle at it and then eat.
They are massive framed
And gentle, these horses of
The fields, and they amble to
The plough and shuffle into
Place to be harnessed, .
The leather gleams in the
Clear morning air, and they
Paw the ground and nod
Their heads as though
Talking together..
The ploughman is alone,
That is how he likes it
For forty years he has
Driven the plough,
He loves his horses,
And ploughing is his art.
The horses stand perfectly
Still as he sets the share and
The coulter then
As they move down the
Field, the harnesses jingle,
And the horse brasses
the furrow horse
Walks neatly in the furrow.
Three beings at work,
They move as one.
The ploughman
Walks steadying the
Plough with his hands
His whole being is

Watchful so that each
Furrow is perfect, the soil
Sharp-angled, and smooth.
At midday they rest,
A pie and ale
For the ploughman
And oats for the horses,
Then on again into the
Afternoon, trampling the earth.
The day is tired now
The light red with evening,
A breeze blows
Them homeward, and the sky
Is full of birds coming in to roost.
They are groomed and fed,
They stand ruminating, their
Tails swishing to drive off
The insects that are busy
Biting.
Their day is done.

.

Mike Tonkin

Hurt.

My private moments
Have been invaded..
She went
where nobody else
has been, .,
she feels betrayed
by what I have written there.
But I to feel betrayed
that someone else's
eyes have read
words that have no meaning..
But I love her
So much
That there is no betrayal
Only love.

She is so young,
Nothing can come of
my love for her,
yet my love is total,
completely hers

She is like a wounded bird
running aimlessly
along the ground,
a hurt wing
dragging so painfully
through the dirt
her cries going unheeded,
but if she
stopped for a moment
she would have
heard my love
crying out her name

Let me share the pain,
let me wrap arms
that hold you,
so firmly and yet

so gently, .
let us talk
and cleanse our minds
of everything
except our love.

.

Mike Tonkin

I Would Like.....

I would like to wake
In the morning
And watch you sleeping,
You sleep so,
So quietly.

I would like to walk
Hand in hand
With you
In the shade of trees
It is so cool and peaceful.

I would like to be with you
Beside a meandering river,
And play ducks and drakes
With you
Over the quiet water.

I would like to see your
Face alive with interest
As a young bird,
Learning to fly.
Launches itself from the nest.

I would like to be
In a city early in the morning
With you, and watch
As it awakens.
It is strangely beautiful.

I would like to fold you up
In my arms and talk
To you of this and that
And hear the laughter
In your voice as you answer.

We would make love.
I would bring you
Gently back to earth

With whispers.
You would be so safe.

You see my darling
We have so much to do,
And no time to do it in.
All I can say is
I do love you.

Mike Tonkin

In Search Of A Nascent Dream

I think I shall
No longer walk among limpid pools,
In and out of caves,
Wandering along the shore
In search of a nascent dream.

I think I shall
No longer sit among trees
Green leafed and heavy with blossom
Breathing in their scent and their strength
Boughs like encircling arms protecting me

I think I shall
No longer run on the high moors
And see the distant tors
Shimmering in the sunlight
And know they are my heritage.

I think I shall
No longer lie in the fields
That I love, in the long grass
Where I have loved
The women in my life.

I think I shall
No longer drive in my town
And see those who have down
The years been my friends
Going about their lives

I think I shall
No longer swim in the river
And feel that time has fractured
And see all the people
Who have lived here
Down through the ages
Smiling at me

I will instead

Sit in the sun
And dream.

Mike Tonkin

Kennall Vale

The valley is silent apart from the
calls of woodland birds,
a single anoraked figure exercising his
canine companion,
who darts
from thicket to long grass in search
Of a scent,
and the scuffle of nocturnal feet
hurrying home before the dawn,
creeping over the horizon
in a crash of colour,
heralding in the new day.

The wooded slopes are
a bosky backdropp to the ruins,
in this idyllic setting of winding
waterways and leafy glades.

They made gunpowder here
that innocent looking black powder.
Men, and girls with yellow hands,
laboured to produce this explosive
mixture in mans hunger for battle.
But the valley which rang to the
sound of machines and the industry of war
is now a backwater of peace.

Another more powerful force is at work,
that of mother nature,
with a quiet industry she reclaims
her own.
Imperceptibly and with studied care,
tree roots seek out
weaknesses in walls and floors,
while wind and rain cause the
ironwork to decay.
Wooden doors and window frames
rot, small beasts working under
natures tutelage gnaw and

reduce to ashes mans dreams of mastery.
The stonework will take much longer
to break down, but will in the end
be just a pile of rocks
decorated with moss and lichen.

As the heat of the sun wakes
the slumbering giant
and shakes
out her dark green raiment,
it becomes a beautiful wild garden.
Bluebells, primroses and anemones
decorate the valley, a glimpse of a
multicoloured kingfisher in the sunlight,
a blackbird collecting nesting materials,
and in a pool of clean, clear water
a robin bathes.
Lilly of the Valley, more perfumed than
gunpowder drench the air
subtlety, seducing
the senses.

The valley is tranquil now,
the men and machines are no more,
but the valley will remembers them
and what they did to her.
She will not forget.

Written with Gillian Rowe

Mike Tonkin

Let Her Sleep

My shadow falls on
Her sleeping face
It creeps over her body
Like a sweet song,
I am nothing without her
And when I kiss her mouth
I feel her breath
So gently on my cheek
Like a lance of light
Through the dark hours.
I am ensnared by her
Beauty
I want to tell her
Of my love
I have the words
But not the order of them
And I am not able
To construct a picture
That will tell her
What I mean when I say
I love you.
I want to love her,
To become one with her,
To take her
Up so high
That the fall
Will be cataclysmic,
She will dive headlong
Through her life
As if on a helter skelter
To nowhere,
And still she does
Not wake.
Let her sleep
I will not rouse her.

Mike Tonkin

Letter From Lands End

The last place on earth
Before you get to
America,
Land's End.
But now
You have to go through
A bloody amusement park
To get there.
Why did they allow it?
Damned planners
Why did they allow it?
It cost millions but
They are making
Millions
It's a good deal
You just sit back and
The money rolls in.
And the tourists are
Happy.

I knew it in the fifties,
There were jerry built
Houses and
Collapsing shops
Selling lighthouses and
Ashtrays and
Other things made out of
Serpentine.
Those buildings
Were at the end
Of the world
And when you left them
Behind there were
Only the cliffs and
Miles of
Hunchbacked sea
Hurling itself against
The rock walls
In the hope of maybe

Making a way
Through to
Atlantis and magical
Lyonesse.
Watching the weather
Is like watching a war.
Great banks of
Thunder clouds racing
Across the sky and
Rain falling like
A thick curtain. It stops
And you hold your breath,
Then it starts again and
Takes you by surprise
With it's ferocity,
A shaft of watery
Sun is etched
In the sky and as you
Watch
It is extinguished
Everything is bleak
And dark again and
You feel so lonely.
Lightning forks across
The sky
And lights up the
Desolate scene
And thunder
Rolls and crashes
And it makes you think
Of the end of the world.
That wind is so
Powerful and as
The waves batter
The cliffs
You feel that it
Will reach out
With it's little finger and
Pluck you into the maelstrom.

If you get the chance
Go there and see

A storm
You will get soaked
But what is a soaking
When you are watching
The heavens perform
You perhaps think
That I am mad
Perhaps I am
But it is better
Than any film.
It is real

Mike Tonkin

Old Kea Church.

I saw it first
When I was five,
It was small,
So small
So Cornish.
Inside it was painted white
And two of it's windows
Were of Stained Glass
So simple and
Beautiful
The pews glowed
Warm and brown
In the evening light
It was a place
Of peace.
And God
Must think it
Was good.
But when I was older
The world
And God
Didn't go together
I lost faith
But I didn't
Lose my love of
Old Kea Church.

Mike Tonkin

Questions.

I ask
Questions
Of you,
I hear them
Echoing
Down the
Steps of time
In vain.
They give
A sharp cry
And die.
I mourn their
Passing,
But so many
Have died
I no longer
Remember
Them.
Questions I am
Immersed in
I ask you,
It is as if you
Do not
Hear.
They cling to
Life
Willing you to
Answer,
But they are
Not heard.
And go
Unnoticed.
They
Die
Unfulfilled.

..

Mike Tonkin

Smiling

You are dead..
Dead..
So I will think of
Green fields and blue skies,
Of birds circling high in the heavens, ,
The sun burning my back,
And your face
Smiling at me,
I know where to find
You now
I need never be
Alone again.

Mike Tonkin

Somebody

Who is this woman
Who came into my life
Seemingly
Eons ago,
She is inside me
A constant
That I
Cannot ignore
Electric messages
Pass between us
That is all
And yet,
And yet..
I can't tell her about
My dreams
But I will sometimes
Wake
In the darkness
Of the night
Sweating and
Trembling
I am alive
And I can smell
The form of her,

I
Can
Never
Remember
My
Dreams

Her pale body
Lies along
The length of me
And she is not a
Stranger
But a part of me.

Stroke

I had a stroke,
One minute I was
Michael J Tonkin,
The next I was
.....Nothing.
When I finally
Regained conciousness,
I couldn't say a word
I could think words
But I couldn't
Speak them.
I couldn't move in bed
One side of my body
Didn't work..
I accepted it.
I knew I was very ill
I accepted it
I wouldn't be
Normal again.
I accepted that too.
I lived in a dream
Sometimes awake
Sometimes asleep
Thinking, thinking
What was I thinking
I don't know
A tube came out
Of my stomach
How the hell
Did that get there
Was I dying....
Oh Christ.....but
I couldn't care less
It was wonderful
I couldn't care less
Dying was so easy.
There was a girl
In the bed opposite
She was helpless

She was about eighteen
And so very lovely
I wished myself dead
And her well.
Her mother came
And nursed her
She too was beautiful
And very brave
Day followed day
I was never fed
Yet I never felt hungry.
It was a passing thought,
Then one day
I was well enough
To leave.
Well enough. Ha!

I arrived at the
Nursing Home.
I was put to bed.
I was left alone.
I wept.
Was this to be
My future.
Nobody talked to me,
They were much too busy.
I was in nappies,
Nappies!
And this bloody tube
That ran to a bottle
And fed me
Through my stomach.
I was alone for hours.
It is very lonely
Being ill.
God its lonely.
How the hell has he
Got in here,
This has nothing to
Do with him.
.....Or maybe it has.
He's got to have his

Pound of flesh,
You can't just have
A stroke,
It always has to
Get worse.
He's got enough tricks
Up his sleeve
To fill a circus.
I don't believe
In God.
I've got an electric
Wheel chair now,
I don't have to wait
For someone
To push me any more.
Nobody talked to me
They were much too busy..
I try to talk and
It's gibberish.
I know what to say
But it comes out
As gibberish.
It should be easy
But it's not.
A nurse appeared.
Cheerful
And efficient.
I seemed to know her.
Her smile
Was understanding,
And it cheered me,
It made me think
For the first time
That life wasn't all bad..
Why does my skin
Itch so..
Sometimes it is
Unbearable, .
It's as if I have
A million
Ants
Working under my skin...

I've got a
Nebuliser system now
I put on the mask
And breathe in the stuff
And feel better
For a while.
During the last year
I have learnt to
Talk again.
I read a book out loud
To myself.
It took a hell of a long time
But I can talk.
Nobody talked to me
They were much too busy.
I had two or three
Trips to hospital.
They always put me on
A puree diet
And two measures of
Instant food thickener
In my drink.
The food tastes foul
And you eat your
Drink off a spoon.
If I have to go in again
I shan't eat.
I'm not eating
Pap, or drinking
That muck.
The physiotherapist was
Teaching me to walk.
I would stand up
And she would smack me
Behind the knees
Until I was standing
Quite straight.
Blow that for a load
Of soldiers.
I had no confidence
In her.
At Christmas she said

I'm not coming any more.
She'd given up
I was overjoyed..
I never saw her again.
This last time
They tried something
Different, they gave
Me more of the
Steroids,
And took me off them
More slowly.
It doesn't work.
Nobody talked to me
They were much too busy.

It would be nice
To feel well,
To wake up in the
Morning
And to say to myself,
What shall I do today.
But then, I wouldn't be
In here.
The nurse has been
Wonderful.
She makes me do things,
Well not makes me
More asks me
To do them.
Who am I kidding.
She makes me do things,
But she has also become
My friend.
Am I happy
Am I content.
Am I at peace with myself
I'm not certain about anything.
Something is bound
To happen.
Oh, what the hell..

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Mike Tonkin

Summer 1952

That heat drenched summer
Long passed now,
That summer
How we loved lying on the lazy sand.
Sun soaked,
Bodies close together
Love cloaked.
Searching the endless sky
With eyes
Filled with ecstasy.
Time stilled.
Hearing the siren sea
Calling us
From the long dune grass
Windquivering.
Standing in the midst of emptiness
Alone on the hushing strand
In utter carelessness.
Running, fingers clasped
Through eternity,
Over the barren beach
Completely free.
Soothing in the coolness of the sea
Spirits bruised by passion's
Fierce intensity.
Oh, how we loved that summer
Long passed now.
That summer how we loved.

Mike Tonkin

The Sky Is Full Of Holes

The sky needs mending
Because it is full of holes,
The thunder is rending
The raging night apart.

Storm clouds race across
The dark, malevolent heavens,
And sheet lightning
Illuminates the nights agony.

Raindrops like Gods tears
Fall in a never ending wall
Of water, this must end
Or man will surely drown.

The aftermath is silence,
The night sky shines
So clear it blinds the angels
And all is still and beautiful.

The sky needs mending
Because it is full of holes.

Mike Tonkin

There Is Always A Moment

There is always a moment
Just before you sleep
When you feel a tremor
In your heart.
And as sleep takes control
Of you
You float in the gentle darkness
Of the night

Is sleeping like death I wonder?
Does it prepare you for the
Final sleep?
Does it prepare you?
To know the answer one has to
Talk to God
But where is he, he is never here
Perhaps he is hard of hearing

Mike Tonkin

They Sing "hallejuhah"

The morning sun dances among the trees
And the shadows join it and sparkle with the sunlight
The gravestones growing from the long grass
Are warmed by the words upon them
And the words call down to them, the dead,
And comfort them.

It is so quiet and not a breath of wind disturbs the foxgloves
And the old roses with their perfume which is everywhere,
And I stand still and think of these dead souls who lie
So quietly beneath the ground and wonder
What they were in life, what prepared them
For the long dreamless sleep.

It is Sunday and I imagine the dead spirits wake
And watch who comes here today to pray,
The church is cool, the woodwork shines with use,
The winding steps of the pulpit are ready to accept
The old man who knows it so well, the stone is mellow
And worn with the word of God.

They come in their summer dresses and Sunday best
To thank their Lord for what they have, and to impress
Upon him that they are truly good and bless his name,
And the old man who knows it so well tells them that
They are all sinners and should repent,
And they sing loudly "Hallejuhah"

They file out their duty done and laugh out loud
With the old man who knows it so well and return
To their homes feeling the better for their sacrifice.

The afternoon sun dances among the trees
And the shadows join it and sparkle with the sunlight
It is quiet again and not a breath of wind disturbs the foxgloves
And the old roses with their perfume which is everywhere.

Mike Tonkin

Wandering

Wandering

Aimlessly amongst the trees
And the wet decaying leaves.

Silence.

Just the dripping wetness,
Stark life dying

A quick unknowing death.

Nothing growing

Life suspended by the winter cold.

Only my moist breath

Hanging in the still air

Marks my passing,

Lingering behind me

As if waiting for orther life,

And then despairing

Falling on the dead leaves

As if to revive them

And restore to them their beauty.

I close my eyes

And staring blindly at the cruel sky

I will the greenness to return

The warmth, the scents of life.

My taut muscles ache,

The blood beats loudly in my ears

Drowning the silence.

I sink into the brown softness of it

Beneath my feet.

Even the knowledge

Of dormant life around me

Cannot alleviate my misery

I turn and walk away

Hurrying quickly to the road,

And the sound of my feet

Upon the oil flecked surface

Comfort me..

When I Meet The Muse

People ask me what I am doing writing poetry.
What a damn fool question, don't they know
It is because I cannot stop myself from jotting
Down a few lines when I meet the muse.
I steal from him words that I can hear ringing
Around the world, words that sing to me
So sweet a song that my heart cries out
To be included in the piece, but that is
Not allowed, so you find words that rhyme
Instead. At other times you muddle on with
Words that do not rhyme and will not In
A million years, but wait, listen to it being read
Free verse is the answer with nothing rhyming
And do you know it reads well it's surprising
But it really can sound like it is behaving. So
Anything goes and they battle in
My head for recognition. That old
Muse likes to confuse.

Mike Tonkin

Why Do I Love You

Why do I love you
It seems easy to explain,
But it is not.

You treat me like a man
Not like the deformed
Creature that I am, .
You say that you are
Proud of me
But why I shall
Never really understand.
You have laughed
With me,
You have cried
The tears running down
Your sweet face
Heartrending and sad, .
You have walked
In the sun with me
Your hand on my shoulder
Keeping me safe, ,
You have put me to bed
When I have been unwell
Said a few words
And then left,
And I sleep
Just like that
And when I awake
You are there.
Memories are important
To me
When I am down
I slip into my mind
Where I can be alone
And think my way
To happiness..
Do you remember?
Do you remember
How I used to

Walk everyday?
You were so patient
Walking up and down
With me.
I never got the hang of it
And gave it up.
Should I have tried harder?
Sometimes we used to go
Into the garden. Oh
I remember that summer,
I remember the warmth
Of your smile.
You know
I am not the same person
That I was
I am more alive
Than ever.
Loving someone
Is good for me,
And when I am well
There is not enough
Time in the day
To do everything
I want,
And then there is always
You

My love keeps me warm
Being warm and alive
Is everything
You are always there
In my mind
You are always there
For me, .
Before I sleep every night
I think of you
And thank you
For making me human
.

Mike Tonkin

Your Life Etched In Time

Before you there were women who delighted,
But when you came along you were
The only one, there were not enough
Stars in the sky

To light your passing. You walked with
Me for so short a time, and left me with
So many memories that I would need
A lifetime to remember..

Oh woman, my love, you had your life
Etched in time when I came surprising
You, and with little polish I entered your
Life and remained there.

When you smiled at me I was lost, Oh
That smile, and something happened to you,
You came into my arms and found that
I had captivated you.

So time became unimportant to us. We
Lived at our own pace savouring each
Moment as though it was the last, curled
Up in our love.

Sometimes in the darkness of the night
I swear at fate for taking you away
From me, and I wonder that you met
Death with such equanimity.

I even riled at you for leaving me here
And going into that unknown land alone.
I pray that it is a quiet place where
You can be content.

You gave me everything that I could have
Wanted and I wanted to give you what I
Had. Sleep deeply in the still eons.
You are mine forever

Mike Tonkin