

Poetry Series

**Paul Gerard Reed**  
**- poems -**

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# Paul Gerard Reed()

All my poems since 2010 are on .

I wrote 365 poems between October 2010 and 2011.

I would like to write over 1,000 poems but as I have found numerical challenges usually reduce the quality (if there was any to begin with) .

Inspirations - all poets with a feeling for nature and 'insignificant' things that are actually significant.

Motivations - to express emotions, make people laugh or otherwise connect with the writing emotionally.

# A Bubble About To Pop

Are we just ants in the pavement cracks?  
And the sky is just the sole of someone's boot  
The moon a pearl on our army's silvery backs  
Drawing us on to the earth's tap root

Are we just tiny specks of dust?  
Moved around by a godly hand  
Amongst the dirt and dried-up rust  
Of a heaped-up shale tip land

Do matchsticks make our forests and trees?  
Is the ocean a solitary drop  
Are we crawling on our hands and knees  
In a bubble about to pop

Paul Gerard Reed

# A Child's Voice

We adults trudge through our care-worn days  
Lives lived in a frenzied and anxious haze  
But in a moment, in life we again rejoice  
All we need is to hear a child's voice

Innocence and joy mingled in a high-pitched note  
The enemies of tiredness and sorrow are smote  
May we forever continue to be beguiled  
By the angelic voice of a child

Paul Gerard Reed

# A Day At Blyth

The crowds gathered on Blyth's beach  
To see how far into the past they could reach  
And under their slightly cloudy skies blue  
Re-enact the battles of World War Two

He had targeted this afternoon for a while  
To be snapped holding a Russian hand pistol was just his style  
But even as he swung that weapon on his hips  
His mind turned to some of Blyth's tasty fish and chips

He dashed away from the beach, absent-mindedly clutching the gun  
A strong image in his mind of cod and chips had begun  
But as his appetite became ever more strong  
He noticed the queue at the fish shop was some thirty yards long

Now even if in his frustration he had unloaded some lead  
The bullet wouldn't even have reached the man at the queue's head  
For although this tale seems a mite strange  
The gun he grasped had barely a thirty yard range

Despairingly he turned back the way he had come  
With empty stomach and feeling rather glum  
But just to add to his day, seemingly running out of luck  
Amongst the guns and smoke a black dog had run amok

Far from thoughts of the D-Day landings or Dunkirk  
The crowd were being entertained by a dog gone berserk  
And as the organisers ruefully looked on  
The show was stolen by a black alsatian called Ron

Paul Gerard Reed

# A Day At The Races

All were gathered at Gosforth Park  
With a good days racing in view  
Hearty banter was being exchanged  
In the dining room as the clamour grew

Amongst the hordes, our central character  
Restlessly waiting to be fed  
When, stomach rumbling, he could wait no more  
And tore the cellophane off the bread

A minor scuffle ensued with the catering staff  
As bread supplies were apparently low  
'Too late!' cried he in gleeful triumph  
And sank his teeth into the dough

'You could have waited!' cried the waitress  
'You impatient and greedy oaf!  
Now we're fresh out of French sticks  
And I'll have to pop out for a loaf!'

Fortunately at that moment the starters arrived  
And the man, not one you can dupe  
Got his eye on a steaming hot bowl  
Of a particularly delicious Thai soup

Worse followed however when the salad was served  
And whilst, as usual, alert  
He mis-pronged his cherry tomato  
Which smashed into a fellow guest's shirt

The guest, indignant, rose immediately  
And, while stifling a curse  
Made frantic attempts to sponge off the stain  
Only to succeed in making it worse

'You rotter!' he bellowed at our chap  
And seizing a chunk of pork pie  
Abandoned all semblance of dignity  
And threw it at our hero's left eye

As a man of quick reactions, he ducked  
And the pie flew past his left ear  
Only to land with a gigantic splash  
In an architect from Whickham's cold beer

The architect's revenge was sure and swift  
And scooping up the last of his rice pud  
Catapulted it skilfully with his spoon  
To land foursquare on the guest's nose with a thud

He in turn tipped over the architect's table  
And upset the cutlery, plates and the teas  
And then glowering down at the architect  
Yelled 'That's the last time I pay your bloody fees! '

I don't need to tell you what happened next  
And to cut a long story short  
All hell broke loose akin to World War Three  
And our hero had to abort

He left behind him an undignified brawl  
With professionals losing their cool  
Throwing plates of sherry trifle at each other  
Just like you used to at school

So the lesson to heed from this day is clear  
Whether you're tackling your ham or your pork  
Give due respect to the cherry tomato  
And be careful where you dig in your fork!

Paul Gerard Reed

# A Former Life

A former life  
Lying in the bottom of a drawer  
Photographs of times long past  
Now no more,  
Pictures of good things  
A few that were bad  
Happy, smiling faces  
A few that were sad,  
People still here  
Some just clinging on  
Some who have changed  
Some who have gone,  
Forgotten sunny days  
Or laughing in the rain  
Moments of joy  
If we could live them again,  
If time could only re-wind  
If the song be re-sung  
If we could have another chance  
If we were young.

Paul Gerard Reed

# A Gathering For Wogan

'How shall I praise him? Let me count the ways.  
I think he was the tops, the cat's miaow;  
For pity's sake, who else would you allow  
To mutter in your ear each dawn of days  
Just rambling on, with nothing on his mind?

That voice - (an aural newly-ripened peach  
That never spoke to all, but spoke to each,  
Each one he never met, but made his friend)  
Now sounds forevermore, world without end.' - Joanna Lumley from 'For The  
Former Greatest Living Irishman'

Ah, Wogan, I see you've had your day  
Where all gathered to sing you away  
And although I was moved to hear the tributes tossed  
I was sad that in the melee mine was lost;

My sincere words will never be read  
But in my heart they still are said  
For I am no star, a no-one am I  
But I held you higher than the sky

Paul Gerard Reed

# A March Morning

Everything is ready  
As I take the morning air  
Everything is in front of me  
As Spring begins it's repair  
Every shimmy in the hedgerow  
Denotes an impatient life  
Knowing so much is to happen soon  
Hearts brimming and hopes rife;  
A cocktail of high and scattered songs  
Gifted from this little commune  
The wren's flurry of happy notes  
The blackbird's rich and merry tune;  
Were our breasts as bursting as theirs  
Of such energy and joy  
Were our steps as sure as theirs  
Along their hidden branches coy;  
Grant that their bold newness of life  
Makes our lives more whole  
And that their morning melody  
Be planted in our souls

Paul Gerard Reed

# A Peculiar War

It is a peculiar war to wage  
One related in some ways to age  
But against a foe without a form  
Nothing to measure against the norm  
One that undermines your being  
Invisible and unseeing  
It gnaws away at your self belief  
Leaving you wrapped up in grief  
All normality becomes suspended  
And ordinary life is upended  
All you want is to be you again  
To calmly walk in the sun and rain  
To get back to what you were before  
But your fears increase even more  
It needs incredible strength of mind  
The shackles to unravel and unbind  
It doesn't happen in a day  
Or take a month to go away  
Because within you is planted a seed  
Of self doubt that won't recede  
But win the war you absolutely must  
Before your being is turned to dust

Paul Gerard Reed

# A Place

O, to have a place  
Where I could visit you and think,  
To just stand in the breeze  
To consider life's brink;

O, for some moments  
Spent in pure reflection,  
To listen to the silence  
Pervade earthly dejection;

If you just had a place  
In this world you have flown,  
With the seasons abrading  
And the grass overgrown;

O, for a special place  
On some windy hilltop,  
Where the skies rush over  
But let the world stop.

Paul Gerard Reed

# A Rose About To Bloom

Is there anything more beautiful  
Than a rose about to bloom,  
You can hear loved ones voices  
Before they enter the room;

Tomorrow is but a breath away  
But held in outstretched hands,  
Events that have not happened  
Sweeter than today's demands;

The moment of anticipation  
Is oft greater than it's arrival,  
The thought of making it  
Greater than it's survival;

Give me the rosebud with it's potential  
Let me stand halfway up the slope,  
Give me the future in all it's glory  
For things not yet achieved, give me hope.

Paul Gerard Reed

# A Safe Place

That which you have given me  
Has enriched me  
And seeped deep into my bones,  
Hidden away from day to day cares  
But still there;  
Ready for me to call upon when needed  
An inner strength,  
A central core,  
A spirit and a belief  
That life is good  
And worth fighting for;  
A place to come to  
In troubled times  
When storms rage  
And seas are high;  
A safe place where values are kept,  
Where right and wrong are known  
Where love is treasured  
And my conscience preserved;  
The very centre of me  
Around which all other things  
Are mere satellites;  
You placed it there without knowing  
That the tree would ever bear fruit  
But you believed it to be so,  
And that was enough.

Paul Gerard Reed

# A Seagull's Cry

You awoke me from slumber  
At four o'clock this morning  
With your wild call of freedom  
Which sliced the air  
And reached my soul;  
Just one cry, no more,  
All the greater for it's lonely piercing  
Of the gathered gloom;  
And it told me a truth  
That we are on this earth together,  
You and I,  
No different.  
And you brought me reassurance  
And calmed me  
From all of my invented cares.  
Yes, lonely seagull,  
We share the world.

Paul Gerard Reed

# A Summer Rose

I walked past a rose  
On impulse, stopped  
Then turned back;  
How could I discard  
Your folded glory  
Which nothing lacks;  
The shrivelled hand of Winter  
Tried to take you prey  
But failed;  
The frosted blast of early Spring  
With it's icy binds  
And grimy winds that railed;  
All now past memories  
Under your soft pillow  
Of yellow bloom;  
All now swept away  
In the Summer tide  
That is your perfume

Paul Gerard Reed

# A Tale Of Sunday

Our fingers were stained with strawberries  
That we had picked from great long rows  
Some were really funny shapes  
&quot;I've never seen one of those! &quot;;

We then sat outside a café  
But that's when the drizzle started  
I spent twelve quid on coffee and scones  
A fool and his money soon parted;

Sunday afternoon drifted slowly away  
As we strolled into the empty church  
Where my grandson gave an impromptu sermon  
Sat at the organists perch;

We bought s huge French meringue  
That we looked to feast upon  
But it had rather a strange taste,  
Was it cinnamon?

Still, the strawberries were great  
With raspberries and gooseberries mixed  
And next week we'll have a roast chicken dinner  
When we get the oven fixed

Paul Gerard Reed

# A View Of Home

There it is!

Home, near our outstretched arms  
But, from this unnatural viewpoint, still so far away  
An unlikely stranger knocking at our door  
Separated by the waters that pour and fill between,  
That led us here to stray;

How sweet our dreams, but so unattainable,  
How wide our gaze when filled with light,  
How long stretches the time  
That we are away from you,  
Made more bitter by the sight;

On this dismal afternoon we stand apart  
And, now that you are in our eyes,  
Feel more acutely the dull pain of separation  
With the vision of home, comfort and solace  
Across the intervening tearful skies.

Paul Gerard Reed

# A View Of The World

My eyes absorb their view of the world,  
The lazy stream, going on it's way,  
Dribbling it's tranquil message  
To eternity;  
The blue sky, with no reproachment,  
Holding the sun in it's lap  
Cradling it's soothing ray and burning lance,  
Which etch on our minds  
The patterns of summer;  
The mountain bold, standing imperious,  
Aloof and majestic,  
Proud and unchallenged,  
By those who climb or crawl;  
The lake as deep as our thoughts,  
Sending a million stars  
To their beds in heaven;  
The meadow, cool lushness and peace,  
Home to daisy and the patient worm;  
The breeze, the freeness of the air,  
Moving across our face,  
Tingling senses,  
And nestling in the silence  
Between the rushing of the tides;  
The days move with a grace  
Sweeping the earth  
And settling gently to sleep.

Paul Gerard Reed

# A World Away From The Storm

To be in this favourite place again  
Where the light floods my eyes and mind  
So that barren thoughts, no longer grey  
Are whipped up with the cares of the world  
Lifted high by the wind  
And swirled up into the clouds and away;  
Where the low sun picks up each blade of grass  
And carves each one as a separate statue  
Each ennobled and empowered;  
The dancing crests on the waves  
Sparkle and entice our hopes  
And laugh at those that cowered;  
Where we can run uninhibited, free  
To bless the day this land was forged,  
The day God's hand drew this sketch  
Of a place away from woes,  
Away from the world's blind corners  
Which no price in gold could fetch;  
And to think that this place is ours  
Ours to hold in our tiny hands  
To cradle us both safe and warm;  
Our place, our freedom  
The shelter from our troubles  
A world away from the storm

Paul Gerard Reed

# Above The Clouds

Hidden above the clouds  
There is a sunny day,  
Beyond our mortal vision  
But coming to light our way;

In every time of despair  
There is joy to change our fate,  
We cannot hurry it up  
All we can do is wait.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Adversity

It is in adversity

You find the strength of the soul

Not at University

With the future your goal

Not at school or childhood

Will you find it there

But when life, once good,

Leaves the cupboard bare.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Aira Force

Aira Force beckoned us to go and see  
It's source amongst the Lakeland hills  
It's tranquil setting of historic note  
Where Wordsworth spied his daffodils

His eyes would have seen the same as mine  
As he stood there on that morn  
Where warm lush meadows and pink foxgloves  
The path edges and steps adorn

That water which under bridge spills  
And whose riverside beauties evince  
Would have gladdened his view in just the same way  
As mine despite the centuries since

Paul Gerard Reed

# All Of Life

All of life is ahead of you today  
As, unknowing, you immerse yourself in play  
Pure in spirit, unblemished and clean  
Love stored in your heart and loyalty keen;

May this youthful day linger alongside  
As you develop your experience and pride  
Never forget this innocent day  
And let warmth and kindness pave your way.

Paul Gerard Reed

# All Of These Things

All of the things that would be forgotten  
As the days and years pass  
As Autumn turns to Winter  
As the weeds invade the grass  
All of the things that would be forgotten  
But for the picking up of the pen  
The things lost to future generations  
When the now becomes the then  
Just the tiny little things  
Like the smiling and saying hello  
The holding of tender hands  
That warm and loving glow  
The knowing we belong together  
The hopes we all hold inside  
The happiness and the sorrow  
The pools of tears cried  
So, strangers from tomorrow  
Just let your thoughts stray  
To things that would be forgotten  
But for strangers from yesterday

Paul Gerard Reed

# All Right Now

Sensing my doubt, you weighed in  
Through the airwaves with music akin  
To the most exciting sound ever heard  
To label it just 'pop' would be absurd

That magic combination of rock and blues  
Created a momentum none could refuse  
The gravelly Rogers and solid Fraser  
Kossoff's notes slicing the air like a razor

Not to forget Simon Kirke  
Who thrashed the drums till he went beserk  
So please gentlemen, take a bow  
For it truly still is 'All Right Now'

Paul Gerard Reed

# All The People

Between sleep and consciousness  
In dull tones of regret,  
I remembered the names  
Of everyone I had ever met;

Each one's face passing me by  
Now by passage of time cloven,  
Between each silent page  
Of the memories interwoven;

Upon the receptacle of my past  
Each one so carefully embossed,  
Sent to me with the purpose  
That our paths should have crossed;

Now we all make our separate ways  
On routes disparate and diverging,  
But just for these few hours tonight  
Sent back through my mind surging;

Farewell, once again, old friends  
We must re-enact our goodbye,  
To tread our different roads in life  
As time slips slowly by.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Alnwick Castle

O, Alnwick Castle on August noon  
Standing firm against the Summer's swoon  
Stronghold for seven hundred years  
To the Percys and their sons and heirs

We stand high upon ramparts proud  
Above the clinging and jostling crowd  
Overlooking the Aln free-flowing  
Your flag ruffling amidst breeze blowing

Grassy meadows fragrantly creep  
Voles through verdant clover stems peep  
Cowering under the turbulent skies  
Rounded hilltops on which horizon lies

And over the river edge branches stoop  
Within your baileys swallows swoop  
Making light of life's dreary pose  
Racing past prickly thorn on rose

Guinea fowl bicker and announce their quarrel  
On lawns fringed with box and laurel  
The honeybees a contented song drone  
Until a sharp storm turns wet the stone

The grass thus freshened and renewed  
The gravel paths with showery rain imbued  
The proud walls cleansed and soaked  
History once again evoked

So reluctantly we leave you now  
And let the evening take it's bow  
But be assured we will return again  
To Alnwick Castle in sun and rain

Paul Gerard Reed

# Ammonite

Mounted in a plastic case  
Absorbing dull modern light  
Lay a tiny ribbed coil of stone  
The ancient ammonite;

How you held fast to your shape  
Imprinted as ancient rocks piled  
Through the dinosaur and ice ages  
Under glaciers and seas that were wild;

Unmoved by evolution's urge  
By roar of fire and gulf of flood  
By cavemen and stone circles  
By battle and spill of blood;

As coal and oily layers formed  
As woods grew spelks and thorny burrs  
You stayed exactly the same  
For a hundred million years

Now, my friend, your resting place  
Is in your little plastic case  
Where your form still proudly coils  
Despite time's haggard face

Paul Gerard Reed

# Amongst The Woods

I like to be amongst the woods  
In shaded places  
With a suggestion of sunshine  
Where the birds sing high in the treetops  
And hopes soar alongside;  
I like to be in quiet places  
Where footsteps are dampened  
And strident voices not heard  
Where the kingdom belongs to someone else  
And not us;  
Where breezes carelessly play through the leaves  
Where thick boughs hang imperious  
In their maturity;  
Where the test of time has been stood  
And peace still exists;  
I like to be amongst the woods  
Where the oak rings lie hidden  
In gnarly trunks  
And the squirrel dashes with the hare  
Where there are soothing things everywhere;  
I like to be amongst the woods

Paul Gerard Reed

# Andrew Marvell

A slim booklet  
Of collected verse  
By Andrew Marvell  
Did brilliance disperse

Only two poems  
Or maybe three  
But a bit of a bargain  
At only 50p

Paul Gerard Reed

# Animal Ways

Does a crocodile know it's a Monday morning?  
When the giraffe lopes lazily around  
Does that sinking feeling abound  
The one we have when Monday's dawning?

Do llamas have money troubles?  
Can there be tigers overdrawn,  
Or hard-up deer and fawn  
Placing desperate each-way doubles?

Do hippos go for woodland walks?  
And what do lions do for leisure,  
Eat low-fat or just for pleasure  
Attend seminars and talks?

Do zebras have political debate  
Watch their own version of 'Question Time'  
To discuss stripy issues and crime  
Or is it on too late?

Is it just us humans who have fashion whims?  
Do camels wear low-slung trousers  
Dangly jewellery and flowery blouses  
Wear designer trunks when going for swims?

As David Attenborough once famously opined  
Animals wouldn't be bereft  
If all the humans got up and left  
They'd get on without us just fine.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Another Day

I think of all the holidays not taken  
When funds were not enough  
All the sunny smiles forsaken  
As our drives landed in the rough;

All the times we stood out of the way  
And had to eat each crumb  
We said 'wait for another day'  
For it will surely come;

I think of mountains and blue skies  
The rippling surface of a lake  
The mornings with the sun on the rise  
The things for which I ache;

Those days we could have had  
But had to take another track  
Opportunities missed are sad  
For you can never get them back.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Another Day Done

Another day done  
More work begun  
But not yet ended

Another sun set  
Evening time met  
Stars have ascended

Time sweeps clock face  
Darkness creeps apace  
Day's finish in sight

Another day older  
Suns warmth grows colder  
Wait for morning light

Paul Gerard Reed

# Armistice

'What was to come next? They did not know - and hardly cared. Their minds were numbed by the shock of peace. The past consumed their whole consciousness. The present did not exist-and the future was inconceivable.'

What awaits us now?  
The night's silence holds us in it's grip  
The stars hold steady in the sky  
Watching over this terrifying life  
As fear trembles the ground.  
And, on the day we have waited for,  
Our senses desert us  
Where is home?  
Now emptiness is all around,  
And the days on which our cradles were rocked  
Are lost in a dream.

Paul Gerard Reed

# As The Morning Breaks

As the morning breaks  
We go our separate ways  
But always think of each other;  
We do our own things  
We get through our day  
Never forgetting one another;  
We both look ahead  
To when the evening comes  
And we can renew invisible tether;  
For the journey home  
Is our reward at last  
Once again we are together

Paul Gerard Reed

# At Last

The omniscient sky gulped  
And emitted a long, low breath,  
Bedraggled spectators on the touchline  
Wanting to be there at 'the death';

Tight clusters of new green shoots  
Pushing their way through the dirt,  
The winter defeated once again  
In their joyous uprushing spurt

Paul Gerard Reed

# At Your Own Risk

At your peril, leave me out  
When following your devilish ways, devout  
At your own risk, plainly ignore me  
Who you treat so miserably;

Beware too, the steadfast mind  
That concentrates on being kind  
And which, on a course of happiness set,  
Shows defeat may be defeated yet;

Know you now that all is well  
Despite the clanging doom-laden bell  
That rings out, as if all is lost  
Forget me at your cost;

Caution the pessimistic future-seer  
Who believes in all-pervading fear  
Who is puzzled by my contrary touch  
That clings to hope so much;

Strike out the dead, clad in night  
The timid soul that trembles with fright  
Count me in, to this life so brisk  
And forget me, at your own risk.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Auction

Round and round they walk,  
Unmolested as yet by life,  
Not knowing where they are  
Or where they are to go to;

Associations made, soon to be broken  
In favour of brand new ones  
Unsolicited,  
Who may be as tender  
Or who may be harsh;

Around the ring the bidders shuttle  
Then stand stock still,  
Endlessly consulting catalogues,  
Now and then, one waves  
To change a life;

The auctioneer gestures  
In his practised dance  
With arms waving and pointing,  
Eliciting and persuading,  
And with gavel drop  
Ends the misery of each uncertainty;

Another door opens  
And in steps another  
Who, wild in nervousness  
And unfulfilled potential,  
Lunges and wheels  
Not wanting to be looked at,  
Not wanting to be sold;

And, amongst all the calculations  
Of future worth and glory,  
Another one is bought  
But this time for love.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Autumn Is Born

The chill wind reminds us all  
That Summer is all but over  
England is now in leaf fall  
From Berwick on Tweed to Dover

The crimson sunsets flee  
The strident times have gone  
We reach the end of the spree  
We so depended upon

The rose petals scattered and down  
Our coats are buttoned or zipped  
The thistle has donned his crown  
Our hopes lie torn and ripped

The air rushes at the gate  
It's gusts rattles and swirls  
Summer's treasures too late  
To save us from it's hurls

The sun-laden blossom and scent  
Like stragglers leaving a dance  
Their magic broken and spent  
Their charms no longer entrance

Summers pages a dusty tome  
Its bindings tired and care-worn  
We reluctantly turn for home  
For now the Autumn is born

Paul Gerard Reed

# Ayr Bay

At first light we would stand and stare  
And drink deeply of the breeze,  
Watched the incoming foam ensnare  
Between seaweed and stones squeeze;

At midnight we would gather again  
Under the blackness of hung skies,  
Let your lapping water entertain  
Our ears and searching eyes;

The lights of Ayr would dance and twirl  
Like some ghostly filigree,  
A string of shining pearls  
Stretched out across the sea;

Bring me back again someday  
To this moon-dappled pebbly shore,  
Wrap me around in your beguiling way  
Tell me your secrets once more.

Paul Gerard Reed

## Back Then

The time back then cannot be found,  
Did I ever really live in those days?  
The images in my mind are bound  
By a somnolent, ghostly haze;

The connections seem broken  
Although joined by calendar dates,  
Were the kind words ever spoken?  
Or whispered and drifted away to their fates;

Everyone is gone, gone far away  
Swept up, cast out and destroyed  
And I, I am left here to stray  
Of all my past loves devoid.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Back To The Hissing Lawns

It has taken me  
Thirty five years to be free  
To listen again to the melancholy droll  
Slurping from life's porridge bowl  
All that has happened in between  
Including Queen;  
Things I would rather not have happened  
But have;  
Now I listen to Joni and am not drawn in  
By 'Don't interrupt the sorrow'  
And the fear for tomorrow  
Has passed;  
Nostalgia did return like a wave up the shingle  
But with different overtones now  
And I am not going back  
To the hissing of a summer lawn  
Whence my misery was borne  
With solitude and duty  
No longer appalled by the beauty  
Or in the trance  
Of the 'Boho Dance'  
My calendar no longer circled with compromise  
I found a kingpin as did Edith  
Reality, not a myth  
My summer lawn at Ravensbourne  
Became that at Hawthorne  
And life moved on

Paul Gerard Reed

# Baton

Clammy slates lying lifeless  
Under the dread-black skies,  
Shielding the night from the fire  
Of all those youthful eyes;

A wall, a gate, a bastion set against,  
A ring-fence to keep out the cold,  
As if any such timid defences  
Could stop us growing old;

A kind of marking-place, a signal, a point,  
The end of the race reached at last,  
Knowing as you look on under heavy lids  
That the baton has been passed;

For all of the things that are in you  
And have seen the winter erode and chill,  
Have been launched anew into spring  
With all the years to follow still.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Beach

The low light of the closing day  
Spreads across the drifts and speckles  
It's slanting beams laugh and play  
On the beach's face and freckles;

Restless grains of South Shields sand  
Like the surface of the moon,  
Shifting fragments of our beloved land  
Brown sugar in a spoon;

Evening comes, the setting sun  
Slides under the blackened deep  
One day lost, another to be won  
As the beach follows us to sleep.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Bedposts

I descended from the night  
Wrapped in wings of self-concern  
That fluttered in rhythm  
With my aching head;  
As if slowly slipping out of a dream  
Which had shaped my future  
On the bedposts of a kinder world

Paul Gerard Reed

# Before I Grew Up

There was bread baking on the hearth  
Acker played 'Stranger On The Shore'  
There were all manner of wondrous things  
All of them now no more;

I played football in the street  
And read books in bed with a torch  
Drank fizzy orange from the 'pop man'  
Left muddy wellies in the porch;

Ate my favourite mince and dumplings  
Hated cheese and fish  
Stuck together bits of model planes  
In efforts distinctly amateurish;

Refused to wear glasses  
Even though extremely long-sighted  
Ran home from school with my report  
My progress and shortcomings highlighted;

None of these things I do any more  
I have left those lovely times behind  
But how I wish I could go back  
For one hour to let the past unwind;

Savour once again those boyish moments  
Spent with dear Mam and Dad  
I could tell them again that I loved them  
From the heart of their little lad

Paul Gerard Reed

# Before Spring

Before Spring we stumble in our step  
Without that freshness on the breeze  
That through the Winter slept  
That through all promises sees;

Before Spring we lie asleep  
And wake to icy chills,  
Through half-closed lids we peep  
At harshened fields and hills;

Before Spring our senses dull  
Become exhausted and moribund  
In the charmless lull  
That only April can refund.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Bempton Cliffs

The moor was quiet as the evening dropped  
A barn owl sat serene on a post,  
But at the cliff edge the silence stopped  
To give way to the songs of the coast;

On slender shelves the sea birds crowded  
To huddle amongst their own kith and kin,  
Bempton's cliffs overlain and enshrouded  
Wrapped In your lonely din;

Not forever will I forget the sound  
Or my feelings that welled up inside,  
For stillness and peace lay all around  
In the cries and the crashing tide.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Better Than This

Is there something better than this?

Something out there, unknown  
Akin to heavenly bliss

Something unseen like this seaward breeze

Rustling dry grasses as stalky soldiers  
Standing forever at ease

Is there something out there with a sound

Like this water crashing on rock  
As endless waves are homeward bound...

Is there freedom like this to be found?

Paul Gerard Reed

# Bide Your Time

Bide your time, suffer the blows  
Everything that is meant to, will come to be  
The bud will open and become the rose  
The river will flow patiently to the sea;

Although dark night creeps in with stealth  
And the morning seems a lifetime away  
The rising sun will bring it's wealth  
And you will see the day.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Billion Souls

I am but one of a billion souls  
In the sea of life,  
Restless and troubled,  
Sloping, slanting, cresting the wave's rolls,  
That through our existence  
Have surged and bubbled;

I am just another, lost in the crowd  
A face amongst faces,  
In an eternal queue,  
No-one hears though I shout loud,  
My voice drowned out,  
As if you never knew;

Rescue me, just me alone  
From the others,  
Set me apart,  
But I am not known,  
I have never been here,  
Never got to the start.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Blackbird Song

How calming, the sweet song of the blackbird  
The most melodic tune ever heard,  
From some unseen point amongst the trees,  
The cheery notes drift away on the breeze;

Like the best things in life are meant to be  
All this entertainment is for free  
And one cannot be sad for long  
Once you hear the blackbird's song.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Blue Tit

Your joyous flight, undulating  
Impatient for Spring, not for waiting,  
Darting between the branches bare,  
All at once, everywhere;

In Winter's dark caverns you light a spark,  
The ending of her gloomy days you mark,  
Now with you, we see the Spring,  
In all around us, everything;

The Blue Tit has brought us back  
From the desolate times, so black,  
The sun is rising, the night has gone,  
For you and me, for everyone.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Bluebells

Time has grown over these plots  
Of broken down plinths  
And ragged headstones  
With their faded engraving  
Surnames, still proud in capitals  
And dates from long ago;

The world has moved on  
And left them sleeping underground  
Here they lie, neglected, forgotten  
Lonely in their spring-shaded place  
The dappled sunlight caresses each marker  
And the bluebells grow everywhere

We stand in respect for a moment  
And hear the stillness of the breeze  
That blows through our minds  
We are captive on this earth  
A dying breed forever  
A victim of our own times

Paul Gerard Reed

# Bonfire Night

Not for me the sparks and flames  
Mattresses piled high and old bedframes  
Not for me the acrid smoke  
That gets in clothes and starts to choke  
Not for me old planks and floorboards  
Ripped from the derelict housing hoards  
Not for me the hot potato jacket  
Or sizzling rocket and mortar bomb racket  
No, I'll be sitting by another fire  
That burns more evenly, less haywire  
The one that warms the living room grate  
Without soot or wretch to ameliorate  
With feet firmly planted on carpeted floors  
My bonfire night will be spent indoors

Paul Gerard Reed

# Borrowdale

This winding road  
Long-lost in my dreams,  
Going around bends  
Running beside streams;

O, that I could spend my life  
With not a care,  
Travelling along you  
In the fresh, rainy air;

Not going to cities  
Not stoppng at lights,  
No built-up zones  
No man-made heights;

Framed only by trees,  
Mountains and hills,  
Gorged in the sunshine  
Swathed in the chills;

Yours is a pure route  
Even if ending nowhere,  
O, that I could join you  
To please take me there.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Bounce Back

Despair is the enemy  
It lies in wait to capture me  
It ingrains my mind and bones  
With it's sullen leaden tones;

But I glean that it is only a test  
To see if I can beat the rest  
For what is not challenged can never be  
The fiery spirit of liberty;

So, think of it as a compliment  
One which is truly heaven-sent  
You are important enough to try and beat  
To see if you can stay on your feet;

To bounce back is a quality rare  
One that can restore when nothing seems there  
Fight back, over and over again  
Until the sun dispels the rain.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Bring On

Bring on the hail  
Bring on the snow  
Bring on the winds  
That blow and blow;

Bring on the dark nights  
Bring on the gloom  
Bring on the chill  
That invades every room;

Bring on numbing fingers  
Bring on frozen toes  
Bring on Winter's misery  
And all of it's woes;

Bring on the frost  
Bring on the ice  
But bring on the Spring  
When everything's nice!

Paul Gerard Reed

# Bring The Autumn On

Sultry days of Summer, washed-up and worn out,  
Crawling heat invading the shady hideout,  
Bring the Autumn on;

No longer appealing the drone and the sprawl,  
The bleached-out beach, the marching band's call  
Bring the Autumn on;

Humid and languid we lie prone in pools,  
Slurping cold drinks as the ice cream drools,  
Bring the Autumn on;

Brittle the leaf, once greened and flush,  
Strident voices reduced to a hush,  
Bring the Autumn on;

Sweated, we turn under sheets cloying,  
Exhausted the hedgerows once overjoying,  
Bring the Autumn on;

Bring fresh breezes and berries bright red,  
Bring purple thistles with crowns on their head,  
Bring the Autumn on!

Paul Gerard Reed

# Buttercups

Tiny suns shining upwards  
Carefully plucked and placed under chins  
Then put in pockets to keep forever  
Alongside pine cones, daisies and catkins

Paul Gerard Reed

# By The River

An afternoon,  
An autumn, a stage in our lives,  
Calm for the moment  
Like the peaceful river;

A path, a way forward,  
A route, a direction for our lives  
Far-seeing the future  
Winding to the sea;

We talked of kingfishers,  
Molehills and crab apples,  
Sculptures and willow trees,  
As dusk slowly gathered;

And we were glad to be together,  
Living this life,  
On a tranquil afternoon  
By the river.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Call To Arms

I am called to arms  
A thousand times a day  
To wage this war;  
And each time I must emerge  
Victorious and able to say  
That I can take some more;  
For in this war  
There can be no defeat  
And no sabre rattle;  
Only success countenanced  
Defeat is unacceptable  
Victory speech just prattle;  
Triumph is silent  
And not trumpeted  
No medals to pin or braid;  
Winning just means living  
And facing another day  
Pretending to be unafraid

Paul Gerard Reed

# Camel's Island

We found a place away from the others  
Rambling their way across fields  
For a while to stumble upon freedom  
As the black-backed gulls wheeled;

The chiselled dusty pathway  
Wound down between reposing banks  
Below the sweeping open spaces  
Atop the rock's massed ranks;

And beckoned us down to the sea  
Amidst the piled ruins of stones  
Prised away from the cliffs  
In a million sandy grey tones;

The froth of the incoming tide  
Played between arched rocks and caves  
Probing deep into cracks and chasms  
With it's endlessly searching waves;

Water seeped across the shallow divide  
And kept us and Camel's Island apart  
But it's childhood joys and adventures  
Were still inscribed upon your heart;

Our reverie was suddenly broken  
For a moment the restless waves stilled  
And the steep path called out to us  
As the afternoon air chilled

To close our eyes from the past  
Dry the tears that had fallen in streams  
To leave behind our secret bay  
And this land of hopeless dreams

Paul Gerard Reed

# Cast It Out

"I was angry with my friend:  
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.  
I was angry with my foe:  
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I watered it in fears,  
Night and morning with my tears;  
And I sunned it with smiles,  
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night,  
Till it bore an apple bright.  
And my foe beheld it shine.  
And he knew that it was mine"

From 'A Poison Tree' by William Blake

The sun once burned bright  
In the outside sky  
That wrapped my head around,  
But the glow of the light  
Entered my eye  
And now does me confound;

For the light has turned to fire  
That scorches the soul  
That does but trip and hinders,  
My serenity lost to ire  
My future to spent coal  
All hope turned to cinders;

So now I must cast it out  
This self-imposed ill  
This devil of my own creation  
Put an end to the rout  
Empty resentment's fill  
Bring back life's celebration.



# Cavalcade

Time is drifting away on the breeze  
Day, after day, after day,  
Like a dripping tap  
Our lifeblood slipping away;

The shallowness of skin stretched taut over bone  
Wisening, wrinkling, parched,  
And the sword of the future  
Over everything overarched;

What reassurance can tomorrow bring?  
As memories chill and fade  
What comfort can time bring?  
In it's steady cavalcade.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Cherry Blossom

Cherry blossoms fell like gentle rain  
Their cling on the branch so fleeting,  
Soundlessly descending, touching our faces  
Then earth delicately meeting;

Like our dreams they fluttered down  
Evading outstretched, playful hands,  
Heavenly petals falling in the breeze  
Clustering in carpeted bands;

One by one, they fell  
On the lilt of the cool air passing,  
Then lying on their grassy graves  
In their unflustered pink amassing

Paul Gerard Reed

# Chill

The trees were bare but beautiful  
The waves rose over the mast,  
The sun was brave and dutiful  
In it's fight against the arctic blast;

And although the wind was cold and biting  
I thought of it another way  
For it wrapped around my mind, inviting  
All my troubles to just blow away.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Chin Up

Chin up, young fella,  
Climb to the summit and see  
Life laid out below you  
And what you could turn out to be.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Chrysanthemum

Storer of sunshine  
Keeping the autumn at bay,  
Joy and hope align  
In your glorious display;

Nestled closely together  
Your exuberant, bursting buds,  
A beacon in gloomy weather  
Subduer of anxious floods;

O, bright Chrysanthemum!  
Bringer of fragrance sweet,  
Fall's gold set to maximum  
Cannot with you compete.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Clay

Would that we were made of clay  
So that nothing might hurt us on our way  
Would that we were hewn from rock  
Our innocent notions never shocked

How would it be if we were made from glass  
No- too fragile and too easy to smash  
Better that we were carved from wood  
But no! tomorrow's ashes if we should

Best if we were forged from steel  
So that pain and sorrow we would not feel  
Much the best if we were made of grass  
And be grazed away as cow's feet pass

Paul Gerard Reed

# Cleadon Hills

I stood on the top of the world  
And saw hills from Cheviot to Cleveland  
A North Eastern dreamland  
of sorts;  
And remembered many carefree days  
With the summer forming a haze  
over the grass;  
A place where rabbit and yellowhammer abound  
Where foxes hide  
And the owl abides  
And when the only sound  
Was the movement of the air  
As it swept the hill

Paul Gerard Reed

# Clouds

Clouds

The rolling clouds gather overhead  
Masking the sun from view  
What strength those clouds must have  
What integrity so true;  
To change aspects from bright to bleak  
To change the blue to grey  
To swirl their cloak around the earth  
And stand in daylight's way  
What impenetrable cloth could man invent  
To carry out such similar feat?  
What sturdy but floating veil  
Could rain and hail excrete?  
Yet let the hopeful sun rays poke  
Through such weighty and serious flesh  
To banish the rule of darkness  
To start the morn afresh;  
What turbulent and glowering mass  
Could be set around the world to roam?  
To hold the sun's spears in it's hands  
To thunder provide a home  
Yet drift aimlessly over mountain top  
Lie morose on invisible bed  
Clasp damply indented coastlines  
Betroth that rivers and streams are fed  
So, gather clouds! and block the sun  
Set free your wispy trails  
Stand sullen and immovable  
Or chase along the gales;  
Be there to balance our hopes  
To take with cheer the rain  
For we know that soon you will relent  
And wave through the sun again

Paul Gerard Reed

# Cold Start

One of the worst tasks by far  
Is having to defrost your car  
When the windscreen is all full of ice  
You'd agree it's not particularly nice

The wipers seem welded with superglue  
To the glass and your hands are turning blue  
As you scrape and rub and scratch away  
Just like you had to yesterday

Then another problem you've been posed  
The doors are apparently welded closed  
You try and thaw out the lock with your lighter  
But the frozen morning gets no brighter

Because when you finally wrench open the door  
You fall backwards and fall on the floor  
You dust yourself off and stagger back to your feet  
To see frost scrapings all over the seat

Still, just wait till the engine is on!  
You can get warmed up and sing a brave song  
But, hang on a moment, you start to feel sick  
When the ignition just gives an unhelpful dull 'click'

The battery's flat and even more apposite  
You're rapidly losing the heart for the fight  
You angrily kick out at the nearest wheel  
But hurt your big toe, even though you cant feel

Anything in the rest of your toes or fingers  
That numbingly cold sensation still lingers  
Rub your hands together but still you miserably fail  
To renew the circulation, its all to no avail

By now a full half hour has passed  
Car still on the drive, patience running out fast  
Best to give up now, set yourself free  
And go back indoors for a nice cup of tea

Paul Gerard Reed

# Companions In Life

I KNOW not of what we pondr'd  
Or made pretty pretence to talk  
As, her hand within mine, we wander'd  
Tow'rd the pool by the limetree walk,  
While the dew fell in showers from the passion flowers  
And the blush-rose bent on her stalk.

[From 'Companions' by Charles S. Calverley]

To be there, even when you're not there  
To be alongside  
Even when the street is empty,  
To stand firm despite the tide,  
To do or die without blinking,  
We are companions in life;  
  
To be easy in each other's company  
No strain or stress or impressing,  
No need to prove ourselves or be better  
Or waste time re-assessing,

To do all this without thinking,  
That makes us companions in life;  
  
To have the knowledge, the safety  
Of something eternal, not throw-away  
Something resolute and determined  
Something that will be there every day  
Until the sun in it's final sinking  
We are companions in life.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Coniston

Between the trees, at the edge of the road  
There lies a secret cove  
Where rosebay willow herb entangle their feet  
Enticing us to rove;

There is a tree with a low bough  
Overhanging the waters to rake  
It's leaves through the endless lapping  
Waving to wooded slopes over the lake;

Where warm sun-drenched pebbles lie drunken,  
Begging kisses from the foamy crests;  
Where serenity gradually convinces us  
That today has passed all it's tests;

That all we wished for has been found here  
And those hopes that we dreamed to recruit  
Are just lying in wait for us tomorrow  
And that the future will follow suit.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Conquering Hero (George Frederick - Derby Winner 1874)

&quot;See, the conqu'ring hero comes!  
Sound the trumpets! Beat the drums!  
Sports prepare! The laurel bring!  
Songs of triumph to him sing!  
See, the conqu'ring hero comes!  
Sound the trumpets! Beat the drums! &quot;  
Georg Friedrich Handel

Wroughton village bedecked in red and black  
Excitement in the air, in everything,  
See, the conquering hero is back!  
There, the horse named after a King;

The crowds cheered and drank and sang  
The happy throng formed a procession,  
The band played and the church bells rang  
To celebrate their hero's accession;

The golden chestnut, dappled in the sun  
Come home to his oats and pail,  
Pricking his ears at what he had done  
And those that grabbed at his tail;

But now, his stable is no longer a home  
Demolished, and housing estates built,  
On the serene downs an aerodrome  
Once empty spaces filled to the hilt;

Long drifted away the cheery singing  
The march of progress taken it's place,  
No more are the church bells ringing  
For George Frederick and his famous race.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Cornthwaite Park

An English Sunday morning  
With cricket pitch prepared,  
Lemonade and frothy coffees  
The hint of roast beef hangs in the air;

Over Sunday newspapers  
An unhurried contemplation,  
In the distance, faintly  
Church organ and congregation;

Sun-dappled wooded hideaways  
Quiet winding lanes,  
Dog walkers and joyful dogs  
Swings and climbing frames;

First hopeful rose buds swelling  
Ladybirds engaged in tasks menial,  
Cabbage Whites flutter past in pairs  
Their flimsy beauty ethereal

A late spring Sunday morning  
From pressures we disembark  
To spend a precious hour  
As we walk in Cornthwaite Park

Paul Gerard Reed

## Costa Rica

Would you just take a peek-a  
At those footballers from Costa Rica  
They made the experts sob and cry  
When they beat Uruguay

It all just goes to show  
That the form book can take a blow  
So all those experts, take a bow  
'Cos you don't look so clever now

Perhaps when England are the opponents  
They might have more considered moments  
And predict an English defence that will be leakin'  
From holes drilled through by Costa Ricans

Paul Gerard Reed

# Crocus

The Spring is creeping out of his front door  
Barred for so long, but not any more  
No longer the crocus cowers and kneels  
As the freshened wind makes loops and cartwheels

The treetops brush shoulders, then sway apart  
As blustery rains play the wind's counterpart  
Better days beckon to the weary drover  
And the long road through the Winter is over

Paul Gerard Reed

# Croy Shore

Croy,  
Down a road we were afraid to go  
Around a corner we were afraid to turn  
But we did  
And we found you.

Croy,  
One day in a life  
And I will never return  
One hour in a day  
To spend with you

Croy,  
You heard our voices  
And felt our feet running  
You didn't know us  
But you know us now.

Croy,  
We had never met  
And will never meet again  
But you are in my mind now  
Forever

Paul Gerard Reed

# Crumbs

With these crumbs that are left to us  
We will feed gloriously  
And, as if the hanging boughs never shimmered,  
We will ignore the rights and wrongs  
The fortitude and cowardice  
The bold and the meek  
The kind things  
And the hurt;  
And we will carry on.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Custard

What is it with top chefs?  
They seem obsessed with presentation  
A 'squiggle' and a 'dot' here and there  
Using double cream like embrocation

They put a small dollop of sauce on the plate  
And gaze down as if they just drew it  
Then they get a gnarly big spoon  
And smear the thing right through it

The end result is horrendous  
Enough to turn one to sobriety  
Like something someone has stepped in  
Of the dog and pavement variety

Custard is their worst malfunction  
They smear a tiny bit on the plate  
What I want is a steaming great bowlful  
Or a separate jug- full would be just great

Custard was born to immerse things in  
It's merits I genuinely expound  
Give me a minimum three inch depth of the stuff  
Chefs- don't tiptoe around!

Forget drawing fancy pictures with your dish  
Give custard-lovers what they crave  
Slosh on a gallon of runny custard  
Go on, chefs - be brave!

Paul Gerard Reed

# Cutting The Hedge

After the blackbirds and robins fledge  
Its time for me to cut the hedge  
An enormous beast, it has grown  
Twelve foot high as time has flown

Extending ladders propped against the side  
Up I get with no place to hide  
Gloves on and hedge trimmer whirring away  
The work takes up most of the day

To trim it back to reasonable proportions  
And after taking all safety precautions  
So, yes I think you're quite right to ask  
It is indeed a gigantic task

One I used to carry out three times a year  
When my hands used to move in a sort of a blur  
Now, as age has extorted its price  
I only manage to cut it twice

But when I'm finished I feel pretty good  
Until I realise that feeling's a dud  
For another task now awaits my attention  
Sweeping up the cuttings not to mention

Bagging the lot and taking to tip  
I feel like lying down and having a kip  
To regain my strength and rest my patella  
Next year I think I'll employ a tree feller

Paul Gerard Reed

# Daffodils

Cowering with shy stems and gentle buds  
Not yet opened with flames of yellow  
To match the sun and defy the floods  
To swagger as Spring's bedfellow

The whitewashed wall at your back  
Your only defence against chilly spears  
In the vanguard of Winter's attack  
On the cracked mortar and crumbling piers

Calmer days await your disbelieving stare  
And straighten your timid droop  
Fresh breezes will embolden and banish care  
Proud stance replace wind-blasted stoop

Paul Gerard Reed

# Dance In A Bandstand

The sun is dipping ever lower  
As age makes it's clarion call  
To go just that little bit slower  
The leaves are beginning to fall;

But you are at the sunrise  
The very threshold of the day  
Not yet the need to be wise  
As we carefully prepare your way;

In the bandstand your dances  
Revel in this extended moment  
Celebrate the treasures of life's chances  
Which we so carefully foment;

We wish for your dreams to be collected  
In your hearts where no troubles can mar  
Our love within you forever protected  
When a memory is all that we are.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Dandelion

Gathered up by eager hands  
From your place on rolling green lands  
Youthful eyes see not a poor relation  
But a prize as part of God's creation  
A yellow herald of a new morn  
Not an encroacher of the lawn;

So be proud, dandelion, feel no shame  
Amongst the touted blossoms of higher fame  
The love of those most important is guaranteed  
For childish hearts do not see a weed  
On open slopes or in lee of walls  
But a pinpoint sun which precious hope installs.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Darkness Descends

The darkness descends but we burn our lights  
To stave off the sorrowful swallowing night  
Our lights only penetrate a miniscule of gloom  
A fraction of the blackness that has the earth entombed

We know that if we hold hands and pray  
That we will be granted another day  
When night's enshrouding work is done  
Dispersed by the coming up of the sun

Paul Gerard Reed

# Darlan

The clouds seemed frozen in the sky  
The sliver of moon hung its head  
The world stopped turning for a moment  
For the great Darlan was dead

As you raced over the town moor  
Betwixt The Ruby and The Flame  
You had no sense of what was to come  
As you played your waiting game

McCoy so careful to shield you  
From the head wind you ran protected  
But tragedy stood foursquare ahead  
The suddenness of the end undetected

Only the last hurdle to jump  
The next step the hurdling crown  
But that next step was to be your last  
And to the ground you fell down

The excited shouts died in hoarse throats  
Now only sadness to dwell upon  
Racegoers trudged home in despair  
For the great Darlan was gone

Paul Gerard Reed

# Daybreak In Newcastle

Feet fall flat, echoes unheard  
Shops 'To Let',  
And woodpigeons in pairs  
The silent central motorway I crossed  
On a steel bridge and ramps  
To a curling flight of stairs

I walked through Newcastle at daybreak  
Advertising hoarding squeaking  
And groaning as the wind blows  
Samsung Galaxy, only seen by me  
Young man lying in a doorway  
Dead or alive, who knows?

Do I own this empty city?  
As the sun glanced at dusty facades  
And litter tumbled in gutters  
Has the world died overnight?  
And left only me  
To stare at these locked-down shutters

I am all alone in my reverie  
Amidst guanoed parapets and ledges  
My mind drifting along on the breeze  
In this world of rooks and starlings  
Stalled cars and abandoned tin cans  
City gates without their keys

Paul Gerard Reed

# Daze

See your words  
In glassed frames  
On high walls  
Above serene floors  
And upheld in awe;

So carefully drafted  
Such tensile meaning  
The innards of minds  
Above consciousness,  
Behind the closed door;

You have laid a marker  
Drawn a line  
Lofted the flag  
To a servile flagpole  
In a clouded sky;

The breeze stills  
Settling dust on a shelf  
Imprinted with fear  
Shrouded figures in buttoned coats  
Walk on by;

Others marvel  
At such sealed thoughts  
On these blank walls  
As they tiptoe  
And whisper their praise,

I join the queue  
Pretend to be clever  
Drift slowly past  
Without reading anything  
In a poetic daze.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Decade

Space whirls, passing the earth by  
Night follows day follows night  
Heavens shift, stars stud the sky  
Time flows past in a shimmering light;

Unseen eyes watch our rules and bylaws written  
Our game all ready to play  
By ourselves we are truly smitten  
To throw ten years away;

Here, with our feet leadened  
With no time to make our mark  
Our sounds in the forests deadened  
By the ancient and gnarly bark;

Man is not all he seems  
Saying he will protect his brothers  
But really achieve his selfish dreams  
At the expense of all the others;

See the next decade unfold  
With threats and promises and pride  
Watch as they grow old  
And the opposition deride;

Higher minds will pontificate  
Wise words uttered softly or wailed,  
We will ourselves congratulate  
When all that we have done is failed;

For that which is lost cannot be regained  
This time wasted in unpicking fruit  
Man's mistakes are unrestrained  
With endlessly more to follow suit.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Delicate Threads

With delicate threads we are all bound between  
Unseen ties ravelled around each thought and movement  
And fear is held in check by such flimsy wrapping  
Normality, bobbing like a lobster pot in choppy waters  
Floundering but then recovering and righting itself  
Again and again;  
We pretend and dream to keep ourselves afloat  
But we are not good swimmers;  
And our lives sway and totter with each wave  
Our skins, impermeable at first  
With the authority of youth  
Age and gradually let in the water  
Which threatens to dissolve the precious gossamer binds  
And submerge our sanity  
We hang on and keep bailing out the blues  
And with soundless fright  
Reach for daylight from the night

Paul Gerard Reed

## Denwick (The End Of Summer)

The August sun lay palely on your stone walls  
Telegraph wires hung limp from post to post  
The clouds like ragged tablecloths  
Laid on the serene blue table of their host

Your hedgerows now gangly adolescents  
Outgrown of their Summer flush  
Self-conscious guardians of their neighbouring ditches  
Providors of safe haven to chaffinch and thrush

The growing sense of it all being over  
That this core of the year has to die  
To be left with only a sad farewell  
Haymaking's solemn kiss goodbye

Paul Gerard Reed

# Departing Day

The cool fresh air of the night was there to greet me  
The stillness captured in the skies that had rained,  
The unbridled shouts and screams and cries  
Within the optimism of the departing day ingrained;

The empty silence wrapped its arms around me  
And took me back to the busy day  
And I relived all the joyous games and laughter  
Under the dank clouds sombre grey;

Homework done, races run, marbles rolled, blue and gold,  
Christmas tree both bought and built,  
Little figures round a table in the dark  
Drinks poured, slurped and spilt;

And now the nothingness of the evening  
With not a whisper left to betray  
The unbridled shouts and screams and cries  
That filled the departing day

Paul Gerard Reed

# Derwentwater

With nervous steps I approached  
Along a path I knew  
Familiar aspects once broached  
Before the swift time flew;

The slated steps and gravel  
Tiered layers, faces, everyone,  
A pause for thoughts to unravel,  
The old tea rooms sadly gone;

Then, glimpsed between the trees,  
Beneath the grey clouds looming,  
Your surface, rippling at it's ease  
Sunk between the mountains brooding;

The pebbles and the shingles  
Reaching down to your edge,  
The shivers and the tingles  
Up from my feelings dredged;

Your waters gently cradling  
The glorious days that passed,  
The memories sweetly ladling  
From your depths so vast;

The boats that I rowed  
The aching arms and legs,  
The debts that I owed  
To your backwashes and dregs;

My grandsons took in the scene  
That I once took for granted,  
From the many years between  
Replenished and decanted;

And those days, scattered in the rain  
Unknowing, as the seasons fled,  
We must walk away from again  
With my boots of lead.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Destiny

Optimism is created  
By positive thought  
From the forge of despair  
The future is wrought;

And in the slenderest chance  
We see our goal  
In that finest of margins  
Lies the destiny of the soul.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Din

This place is settled despite the din  
For a welcome awaits within,  
No offence to the sensitive ear  
Are the cries of joy we hear;

What chance has peace against the tide  
Of voluminous shouts of pride  
What chance has serene tranquillity  
To vanquish euphoric mobility?

To sit and await the world's turning  
Hangs pale next to childish yearning  
And reflection would seem a puny prize  
Compared to the happiness in your eyes

Paul Gerard Reed

# Doc Martin

He's a very convincing doctor  
He doesn't like to mess about  
Whether you've got hepatitis  
Or even a spot of gout

If only more doctors  
Were just a bit like him  
None of this soft soap treatment  
Better for life and limb

You get no conversation or flannel  
Just your ailments diagnosed  
No false platitudes or small talk  
Or sympathy for being indisposed

No chit chat or blether  
No paying service to lip  
Just a blunt summary of whats wrong  
Delivered straight from the hip

This type of approach from doctors,  
Whilst we may be shooting for the moon  
Would greatly shorten appointment times  
And save the NHS a fortune

Paul Gerard Reed

# Dogs

You walk everywhere with dogs,  
Tempting you from the shade  
To stray to open places  
Under the sun at it's height;  
Along coastlines, in parks, on paths  
Through sun-scattered woods  
Through long grasses  
Up and down hills;  
Under moonlit black skies in the dead of night  
When the day has whispered it's goodbye;  
You share his world  
In the sharpness of sight,  
In the scent on the breeze,  
In the faintest sound;  
They drag you from your bed  
To put on muddy shoes  
And walk through rutted ground and puddles  
Go to places you wouldn't go  
Without a dog;  
They take you to the edge of freedom  
Ignoring our boundaries;  
Their energy knows no limit  
They drag your tired legs  
Beyond the distance you mean to go;  
They relish the day  
And jump up to you in sheer joy;  
And to you  
They impart a share of that joy.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Don't Grow Up

Don't grow up  
Although I know you have to  
In life's ancient decree;  
For if you grow up  
Then I will be old  
And I don't want to be

Stay a while as a little one  
Take in your learning  
Of numbers and alphabet;  
But don't grow up  
For I will become old  
Don't grow up - just yet

Paul Gerard Reed

# Downton Abbey

Supposedly set in Yorkshire  
But really nowhere near  
Street scenes shot in Oxfordshire  
And the family 'pile' in Highclere

The quaint world of Downton Abbey  
The Crawleys with influence and power  
The conversations never mono-syllaby  
How quickly passes the hour!

The ladies dressed in fabulous gowns  
With wrists all a bit limpy  
Last night our joy knew no bounds  
With the reappearance of 'Shrimpie';

The Earl of Grantham is a particular treat  
Some might think him a fool  
For this haughty man with country seat  
Is locked in a time capsule

Maggie Smith as Dowager Violet  
Her eloquent lines are of great variety  
Her quips have offended more than a few, I bet  
But, alas, she is beyond impropriety

So settle down next Sunday night  
For another dose of the English upper class  
It serves up entertainment all right  
No other series can surpass

Paul Gerard Reed

# Downtown

In distant memories I am swathed  
Serenaded and softly bathed  
In a musical dream that soothed my fears  
And entranced my innocent eyes and ears

The pink Pye label spun it's hypnotic trance  
And as Petula sang I wanted to dance  
A warm smile slowly replaced my frown  
And I was spirited away 'Downtown'

It's hard to believe fifty years have passed  
Through adulthood all my cares amassed  
Half a century is gone and over  
Since we danced the gentle bossa nova

Paul Gerard Reed

# Dreams

Grandsons, you lay young on soft pillow  
Your contract with the future to make,  
The intruding of new thoughts has tired you  
And running caused your legs to ache,  
But with your years ahead of you  
You will spring afresh at daybreak;

For me, the invention of my youth  
Came with the antidote in age,  
The dawning of the new day  
Replaced with futile rage,  
The freedom to run and skip  
Caught in an invisible cage;

That first early glint of life  
That hope and aspiration feeds,  
With the rushing by of the days  
Time and the future bleeds,  
And all the experiences gained  
Slowly the memory exceeds;

Immeasurable time has become  
A mere moment from an aeon,  
Now in the register of beloved names  
On whom the sun once shone,  
I am stood here all alone  
For one by one they have gone;

But like mine, their spirit  
Lays alongside you in your bed,  
And is restoring and enriching  
The dreams that fill your head,  
And our youth, though now departed  
In you will never be dead.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Dried Grass

Dried grass in heaped stripes  
Pulling at our feet as we walked,  
Joyous dog chasing sticks  
Under overhead branches forked;

A calm place, a safe place  
Sheltering it's histories and lives,  
Away from the harsh light above ground  
And the pain that life contrives;

People who had been born  
And grew solemnly from the cot,  
People who other people had loved  
And others that had loved them not;

Would they mind our morning walk  
Between and around their places?  
Would they mind that we read their names  
But had never seen their faces?

And just as the dried grass lies  
In abandoned mounds and rows,  
So they lie, cut down  
Adrift from their earthly pose;

We left them there to carry on  
Close neighbours but with no feud,  
Their mildewed stone crumbling away  
Under the hand of solitude.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Driftwood

Tangled driftwood  
Lies exhausted on the shore,  
Like strands of forgotten thoughts  
From minds that have gone before;

Picked-over ruins  
Heaped and spent,  
Used and discarded  
Jagged and bent;

Orphans of the river  
Beached, vulnerable and prone  
Like orphans of life  
Left to start alone.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Dunstanburgh Castle

I stood within your ruined walls today  
Within roofless towers  
Under floorless floors  
And let the wind's harsh gash play on my face  
Braved the chill  
Through the slitted windows trace;  
Defied the North Sea's blast  
As if the waves had never rushed,  
Decried the miserable past  
As if time had stood still;  
Stood where ancient feet had stood  
And felt what had swayed the minds  
Of those that stood on the same rubbed stone beneath  
And struggled against the same binds;  
Stood transfixed and rooted  
Though your velvet sheep-dotted grass invited me to run  
And hide within the scarred collapses  
As searchlights played;  
Stood and faced John of Gaunt  
As if his gatehouse was mine,  
As if I ruled that castle as surely as the swallows  
Blazing past so near to the tumbled decline;  
And then wanted to run away to the shore  
And gather up sea shells  
To hold tight within my hands  
To remind me of my childish times  
And this day spent in fallen lands

Paul Gerard Reed

# Dusty Track

We wander down a dusty track  
Care-worn, rutted with life's despair  
Ahead a horizon we can never attain  
Each side a ditch to catch the unaware

This track draws our feet onward  
Instinctively on a forward move  
Unable to turn back, we trundle  
Forever in a worm-like groove

Perhaps the path is in a circle  
Without side-road, fork or bend  
A jetty hunched over an eternal lake  
A voyage without an end

Paul Gerard Reed

# Earth

COME, thrust your hands in the warm earth  
And feel her strength through all your veins;  
Breathe her full odors, taste her mouth,  
Which laughs away imagined pains;  
Touch her life's womb, yet know  
This substance makes your grave also.

Extract from 'Goodbye! By Richard Aldington

The earth is slumbering still  
In it's winter clothes  
It lies haphazardly at our feet;  
Yet within are the origins of hope  
The thrust for new life,  
The stirrings of a new age;  
Our trampling feet it does not feel,  
Our rasping breath it does not hear  
For it has it's own plans  
On which our futures bear.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Enthral

O, how I love the childish things,  
The things of no consequence,  
That cause my mind to stall,  
The burning topics of that day  
The red-hot news,  
That isn't really news at all;

How I love to hear excited chatter,  
Delivered earnestly,  
Intended to enthral,  
Telling me absolutely nothing  
Of any real importance  
Except the most important thing of all

Paul Gerard Reed

# Escape With Me

It's not enough to know the world is sour  
Now we have to endure another hour  
On a Sunday at the end of the week  
To prove to us the world is bleak

Now we all have to be chilled to the marrow  
Terror shot to our hearts like an arrow  
What happened to being comforted a while  
By that escapist Sunday style?

Now no longer are we allowed  
We just have to join the crowd  
We must join hands with the thronging neurotics  
Cynicals, moan-a-lots and gritty robotics

Our Sunday evenings no longer paved  
With the escapism we openly craved  
No casebook for Doctor Finlay to carry  
No Arden House with Janet in which to tarry

No longer that brimming feel-good feeling to explain  
Now that there's no Lovejoy and Lady Jane  
No more nestling in the Yorkshire Dales  
With James Herriot when all else failed

No Howard's Way or Onedin Line  
To occupy our Sunday evening time  
No, now we have Quirke and psychological drama  
To spoil the Sundays that were so much calmer

Now we all have to stand in line  
And be fed close-up horror and crime  
Truthful reality takes up the Sunday slot  
But entertaining it certainly is not

Paul Gerard Reed

# Evening

I wait patiently for the evening  
And to be with you  
We speak only now and then, not constantly  
As others do;

But it is sufficient  
Just to be with you  
In the peaceful evening  
When the day is through.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Evening Breeze

When the evening breeze  
Ruffled the leaves in the half-light  
I felt the greatness in the air,  
Just standing there;  
The quietness absorbed all thoughts  
And carried me away to another place  
A place where everything was all right  
With no need for night;  
And in that moment I knew  
That everything that had happened,  
Or was going to be,  
Was down to me, just me;  
The breeze carried the sorrow away  
Into the clouds that slid over the trees,  
Unexpectedly;  
And left me alone

Paul Gerard Reed

# Evening Serenade

The morning wrapped me with it's calm  
When the blackbird arrived with insistent alarm  
And shook the boughs of a leafless tree  
What had broken his mellow reverie?

I was grateful to know it wasn't me  
Who had caused his flight to that leafless tree  
For the blackbird knew me as a friend  
With respect for nature that will never end

I put out the grain and nuts and seeds  
That empty bellies of hungry blue tits feeds  
I cherish the thronging springtime hedge  
Cradling the nest with those to fledge

So, blackbird ring out your warning call  
I trust not directed at me at all  
But to some other enemy that God has made  
I will wait for your evening serenade

Paul Gerard Reed

# Every Day It's Getting Better

Short now the long-awaited time  
When bounteous Spring will return,  
With every day it gets nearer  
The season for which I yearn;

The darkness is slowly abating  
With its comradely twilight and dusk,  
Withdrawing behind the spreading light  
Their demeanour ever more brusque;

The air has a freshened feel  
Gently touching eyes and cheeks,  
The clouds have softened edges  
Through which the intermittent sun peeks;

With every hour it approaches  
Unshackling from bind and fetter,  
A new world is on its way  
Every day it's getting better.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Every Moment

The first fingertips of the sun  
Gently knead our temples  
And find their way between blades of grass,  
Hide in the hedgerow  
And dazzle the morning;

Our re-awakening,  
Our rebirth from the dead,  
When, with sightless eyes  
We lay in submission  
In the tomb of night;

But we have been given another chance  
To hear the birds,  
To taste the air,  
To feel the vibrancy,  
To dance and sing  
At the top of our voices;

Let every second count  
Every moment be relished  
Joy and happiness have their way  
Under blue skies  
Before nightfall comes again.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Every Step Of The Way

Through fringed grasses, frothing cow parsley  
Narrowing like an arrow head  
The long, straight path runs it's course;

Pointing to the water tower  
Serene in the Sunday sky  
With aprons of buttercups and gorse;

And reaching with heavenly arms  
Under a veil of stubborn cloud  
Stand the innocent trees,

From within, a peaceful warbling  
The notes like cherry blossom  
Falling away on the breeze;

And my feet follow yours  
Every step of the way  
On, to sacred tomorrows,

Until the sun shall cease to shine  
The winds all blown away  
And this life drawn to a close.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Everything

I leave to you everything....  
The sunny days  
When joy runs through your veins;  
The view from the mountain top  
With the breeze on your face;  
I leave you the feeling of being loved  
And the comfort of family all around;  
I leave you sacred places  
Where we played,  
Where dreams were made;  
I leave you Sunday mornings  
When the world stops for a moment  
And the coastline shimmers in a haze;  
The tingling feeling of anticipation  
Of another day of freedom;  
I leave you happiness  
The fragrance of the rose  
And the gentle growing of plants;  
I leave you dogs and horses and rabbits  
And all creatures who let you win their trust  
The energy to run and jump  
And to dance when you are full of hope;  
I leave you great moments  
When all of these things reach a peak  
And when history is made;  
I leave you love  
And luck to find a partner  
To share all of these things;  
I leave you everything.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Everything Is Going To Be Alright

You look at me with cares in your eyes  
Reflecting the fear in mine  
Your look is oh, so wise  
And tells of our trials that entwine;

Ever sterner the challenges we face  
The history of good times fading  
But we know this moment is the only place  
Here and now with the past invading;

Hold my hand and be brave today  
And keep tomorrow firmly in sight  
From our life's plan we will not stray  
Everything is going to be alright.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Everything Is In Front Of Us

Not one ounce has been weighed  
On nature's scale of spring  
The trees stand stark and bare  
The lark is yet to sing  
And though it seems winter's grip  
Has been designed without an end  
Everything is in front of us  
Just around the bend;

Not one day in March  
Off the calendar has been crossed  
The borders lie colourless  
The grass entombed in frost,  
But though we read this winter tale  
With the last chapter not in view  
Everything is in front of us  
Every day, every sky so blue;

Not one hopeful dance  
Has been danced with steps in thrill  
Whose bound was warmed with sunshine  
Brightened by the yellow daffodil,  
Not one sunny afternoon has lazed  
Whilst watching sparkling brooks at play  
Everything is in front of us  
Every joy, every happy day

Paul Gerard Reed

# Every Year That Passes

In every year that passes  
You add one to your age,  
But Spring brings a fresh renewal  
And the Winter's scars assuage;  
It lightens up the sombre skies  
Puts energy into the bud,  
Warms the chilly meadow  
And cakes the squelching mud;  
Makes the promising woodland path  
Befriends the lonely hills,  
Brightens the roadside verge  
With thronging daffodils;  
Scorns older steps that shorten  
Brings the leaping new-born lamb,  
Freshly cascades the rushing rivers  
That strain against the dam;  
Conducts the cheery birdsong  
And bids them make their nests  
With twigs that have been prised away  
At the gnarly boughs bequest;  
Chases away the driving rains  
That fragile panes bespattered,  
Gently rocks the daisies heads  
Settles the blown leaves scattered;  
Spring puts hope into sobbing hearts  
Displaces the frost with dew,  
Spring defies the aging process  
By bringing us life anew.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Faded Photographs

I placed the photograph of my father and me  
In front where I could see  
And the sun came out and shone  
Across the powdered edges  
And re-lit the scene;  
Forty years ago  
That place will still exist  
But I will never go back  
I am there now in spirit and memory

Then I looked this morning  
At the picture of mother and me  
On a grey pier  
With hope in my eyes  
But a resigned look in yours;

With chilling heart I realise  
I hold you in separate places  
When you were always together;  
I hope you are together now;  
For the faded and creased photographs  
Have to the suns aging bowed;  
And I know that they will not last forever  
As with you that have both gone;  
But I know that deep in my soul  
My love for you forever lives on

Paul Gerard Reed

# Faded Rose

You sighed, your splendour going  
When inner light from bloom riven,  
The moment passed without me knowing  
That your best had been given;

The sunshine days all flew  
Softening the edges of the light  
Gone – the day I gazed at you  
The pleasure you gave at Summer's height;

Now, with raindrops softly clinging  
Petals wafered and slowly flaking,  
There is still a beauty you are bringing  
The sadness of the Autumn's making;

Lest you think that I do not care  
That all I craved is now diminished  
Scent exhaled and tossed by the air  
Your exquisiteness all finished;

I know that you will return  
From below the clammy earth's umbers  
To rise with a passion re-born  
To wake from Winter's slumbers.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Family Tree

Through the misty shrouds of time  
My lineage composed their rhyme  
Unbeknown to me of course  
As they straddled life's wild horse

My research led me to greet  
Poverty and not enough to eat  
As eleven covered by Sunderland docks  
Crammed into a little shoe box

The notion caused emotions to stir  
If that situation were to re-occur  
Could I survive and live a life?  
Or be swept away by such strife

For the latter I reluctantly opt  
For if my standards were so dropped  
I couldnt keep my head aloft  
On a backbone that was far too soft

But strength I will gather from my forebears  
Amongst the luxuries of my current years  
And realise as I from past histories flee  
They made it possible for me to be me

Paul Gerard Reed

# Far-Off Days

It seemed as if there were no cares  
In those far-off days,  
No sense of passing years,  
Everyone had always been there  
And was going to live forever;

What was life anyway?  
Who needed a beginning and an end?  
This was just the middle  
That stretched to infinity  
And had no boundaries  
Of age or time;

Adolescence a mere irritation  
A mere joining of the other older boys  
As men,  
But still boys inside  
With secrets and comics and toys  
Safe homes away from the world;

Then innocence ended with death  
Unannounced and unexpected  
Sharp, abrupt, shocking  
Despairing,  
Hope became hopelessness  
And the struggle began;

Ever since to recreate  
To relive those joyous days  
To find our own separate loves  
Although nothing would ever be the same  
Never as a boy again  
In those far-off days.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Fate

We do not know our fate  
Or when the unexpected looms,  
We continue from date-to-date  
As the roof falls in on quiet rooms;

We know so much but so little  
In our self-congratulatory race,  
When events beyond our control skittle  
The pins from carefully assembled place;

Our plans are lost as the years pass  
Derailed and scattered away,  
Like the sorry, down-trampled grass  
Once of thrusting, neat-bladed array;

Let the grains of sand gather in the desert  
Let the winds blow every way they choose,  
Sit back whilst overpowering forces assert  
Watch as fate lights it's dampened fuse.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Father

The pictures of you are few now  
Scattered here and there  
Fading, black to grey

Fragments of your old papers  
Kept in boxes  
Will be lost along the way;

But you are not a distant memory  
Although gone for so long  
You are still alive and real in me

Guiding me gently  
Reviving past glories  
Reminding me how it used to be;

And when I am in trouble  
You come to my side  
Father helping son

And the answer becomes clear  
As it always does  
'What would you have done? '

Paul Gerard Reed

# Fearless

At the top of the evening's viewing is billed  
Something to leave you psychologically chilled  
Gore and depression for our ascertainment  
But what happened to entertainment?

Blurred images, rapidly-changing camera angle  
Bloodshot eyes, unhappiness to disentangle  
Eerie distorted noises forming the soundtrack  
Intending to send shivers down your back

The short and swift camera shots  
Change to unduly long views of blood clots  
Bludgeoned heads, innocence destroyed  
Humanity of any warmth void

And cynical people, no-one with any love  
Unnerving scenes shot from above  
Then switching without reason to under your feet  
Just to make your disorientation complete

Who decided we all needed unhinging  
Leaving us in tatters and cringing  
What purpose is being served  
By making people distressed and unnerved?

I think the writers get off on being bleak  
And bringing the same to us every week  
Our happy life is fair game to condemn  
And make sure we are as miserable as them.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Feel The Rain

Feel the rain, upturn your face  
Forming rivulets down walls  
To land in its pre-destined place  
Straight from heaven it falls

Filling rivers, watering the earth  
Replenishing waterfall and cascade  
Making oasis where there was dearth  
Giving birth to rainbows where colours fade

Paul Gerard Reed

# Fellow Traveller

My fellow traveller in life  
That comes with an open heart  
Comparing not to others  
Who play a minor part;

My best and selfless friend  
Who always puts herself last  
Putting loved ones first  
Who cling on to her mast;

My worthy and hardworking ally  
With no pretence or frills,  
But who walks alongside me  
Up life's steepest hills;

And, at the end of each day,  
Sits not in judgment or pose  
And is never bitter  
About ill-deserved woes;

My greatest ever achievement  
Of others that are few  
Is that I found courage to speak  
On the day that I found you.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Filey Brigg

The first fresh light of morning  
Rekindled friendship with the dew  
Lit the great shadows in the angry cliffs  
Stood firm against the North Sea's spew;

Arched out into the vast depths  
Filey Brigg pointed a crooked finger  
It's knuckle turned towards my face  
And beckoned me in to linger

Atop this layered cake of time  
Where brambles grew on stony cills  
The sheer and savage, plunging edge  
Interspersed with bobbing daffodils;

The speck of a skylark hung overhead  
Throbbled down to me his boundless tune  
That split the air and split my heart  
Chased away it's decaying croon;

From within a tangled mass of thorns  
A single blackcap perched resolute  
Weighed me up without shame or fear  
And threw to me his joyous flute;

And on the gentle fragrant breeze  
The curlew flung his lonely note  
That shivered in the new-swept morning air  
With delicate, mournful dote

All of these treasures found me alone  
The only one who thought to rise  
To tramp and breathe the ragged coast  
And steal the morning's prize

Paul Gerard Reed

# Finchale Abbey

From fond far-off days  
The carrying of the river gently to the sea  
Insistent as time  
Brings this day to us at last  
After a generation has passed;

The grass and the stones  
Still rest heavy on the slopes  
Nothing has changed  
The breezes still blow  
Though we were here so long ago;

Can a day from the past  
Ever exist again  
Or does it just drift away  
Never again to be found  
Did our feet ever touch this ground?

No history book can tell  
But we hold dear in our minds  
Those glorious days now gone  
Yes, on some long-lost yesterday  
Along this path we made our way.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Firefly Hedge

Come and join me outside in the dark  
When all that is left of the sun is a spark  
And moonbeams from the night sky have fledged  
And bright lights dance amongst the hedge

Come and join me in Tuscan twilight  
Before we curl up in bed for the night  
Come and look through my excited eyes  
At the fireflies under Italian skies

Feel with me the coolness of the evening  
That has left the sun's heat a-grieving  
Come outside and let my wonder explain  
Hold my hand and be young again

Paul Gerard Reed

# First Visitors

Like a precious curl of hair in a locket  
You placed a daisy in your pocket,  
As I welcomed the first visitors again  
The gorse, the dandelion, buds fresh from the rain;

The world seems freed from whence it was locked away  
The skies are brightened, sun no longer blocked of ray,  
After being patient and having to wait for so long  
All around us a crescendo of sweet birdsong;

Honoured to be pricked and poked by the woody thorns  
Carried over the fields by the bullock's horns  
To be swept up and thrown away on the breeze  
To languish forever in this season of ease;

Blessed that this day to us should be lent  
To imbibe the fresh dew-laden grasses' scent,  
Under the sunny light of heaven to be doused  
To feel spirit and soul once more aroused.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Foghorn Requiem

The breeze rose and fell, wafting stalky grasses  
Quietly but pointedly reminding the masses  
That this event was weather-dependent  
With wind and rain the superintendent

The grey skies cried briefly, but abating their sorrow  
Held back their heaviest tears for the morrow  
And deciding that the air should be no chiller  
Relented and spared the exposed flotilla

Seats were unfolded and small tents erected  
Dogs barked at the excitement detected  
A fox, already frightened, scurried quickly away  
Unsettled but unnoticed by the crowd of the day

Good friends met and cheerily greeted  
Facebook messages were sent and tweets were tweeted  
Then from the cliff edge the faint thrum arose  
Of an assembled brass band blowing its nose

The hubbub of spectators was soon quelled  
As the band struck up and trumpet blare swelled  
Their proud notes drifting eerily through the air  
Lending sombre atmosphere to the whole affair

Then the first uncertain baritone note  
Carried lonely from unspecified boat  
Back to Souter lighthouse that historic morn  
At last! the foghorn requiem is born!

On the grassy slopes we sat enthralled  
As the horns blew and the seagulls called  
Until with a heave, seemingly drawn from the past  
The foghorn emitted a mighty final blast

Which reverberated across the land and sea  
For what truly seemed an eternity  
Then, like a dying man giving his last gasp  
Let life gracefully slip from it's grasp

Paul Gerard Reed

# For All The Days

For all the days you spoilt for me  
For all the days you marred  
You owe me good days in return  
For making life so hard

For all the times that should have been joyous  
The times you turned to sorrow  
For all the days I spent in dread  
Looking towards tomorrow

For all the evenings that should have been normal  
But when you brought fear in the night  
When I recoiled and had to retreat  
You squealed with cruel delight

But despite everything you plotted  
Despite your puerile grin  
I still have my sense of humour  
So you lose - I win

Paul Gerard Reed

# For What Should Tomorrow Bring

For what should tomorrow bring  
More awful than yesterday?  
Sad thoughts ground away  
By time and tide  
Cannot exist forever,

For what do we seek or hope for  
If not fear to confound  
If not our feet on the ground  
And no more, please  
Just the ordinary day to live through.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Forever

You have little legs  
But they will grow  
They will walk  
Where I didn't go;

As the clouds  
Absorbed by the sky  
The passage of time  
Will drift on by

And the daisies that grow  
Under my feet  
Will fade and die  
Become complete

But you will thrive  
Life defeat you never  
You will stay alive  
Exist forever.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Forward Collision

I don't have to use my eyes anymore  
I don't have to make a decision  
I've got a warning alarm in the car  
That says there'll be a "forward collision";

I don't have to use my mind anymore  
To work out my orientation  
I've got a SatNav in the car  
Guiding me to my destination;

I don't have to use my positional skills anymore  
To manoeuvre or judge or feel  
I've got automatic parking in my car  
That turns the steering wheel;

I don't have to press pedals or change gear anymore  
I can just stare blankly at the console  
My car moves at exactly sixty miles an hour  
Using it's cruise control;

Maybe I can avoid travelling altogether  
To go to places I would dread  
I'll press my remote keyless ignition  
And just send the car instead.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Four O'clock

The four o'clock flower waits  
A sleepy tuber underground  
Unhearing of the winter's sound  
Dormant, hidden away from icy spates  
But having an inner heart with a beat  
Ready to explode into the summer heat;

And I have looked after you,  
Four o'clock flower  
Who once knew Peruvian hour  
Spent with tropical skies blue  
But who now cowers in my hand  
Waiting for summer across the land;

This game of survival and preservation  
That we play, waiting  
Spring's wonders accelerating  
Our awe and fascination  
As we watch nature unfurl  
Your pink trumpet and leafy curl;

And when those times come  
We must celebrate with all our might  
Into the cooling twilight  
Where the bees buzz and hum  
Amongst the twining stems  
Your display of summer gems.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Fragments

Dreams are fragments  
Glimpsed upwards  
As we lay;

Of winding staircases  
Leading to skies that don't exist  
And their clouds  
Of stray, forgotten thoughts  
With wispy threads that fray  
Belonging to yesterday.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Free Of The Past

The sun shone through slitted windows  
A snail settled on a speck of dust  
Everything ordinary returned from nowhere  
A sense of ease rested over us

Sheep grazed somewhere on a hillside  
The roads were filled with silent cars  
The town hall bells pealed one o'clock  
There was a broken tulip in a vase

The smile that says I am free of the past  
Ironed clothes in a neat stack  
The realisation slowly dawns  
That the good times are back

Paul Gerard Reed

# From Acorns

The messages are handed down constantly  
But through a fog I couldn't see  
You see, there are too many distractions  
The world is full of excitement for me;

But now I have reached a time  
Rays of light through the fog have slanted  
For your love of nature and animals  
In me has been transplanted;

It might seem to outward eyes  
That no change can be detected  
But all those teachings and things that you said  
Have not been misconnected;

All those walks in forests and parks  
We played on the swings and the slide  
All the things you said I ignored  
But were absorbed very deep down inside

Now a place in my heart has been reserved  
And though I will still act the clown  
For a lifetime I will keep up the fight  
To stop the trees from being cut down.

Paul Gerard Reed

# From Doctor Finlay To Doctor Foster

Back in the sixties, the telephone bell would clang  
In Tannoch Brae and Janet would run along  
To answer sweetly that Doctor Finlay would attempt prognosis  
On another case of whooping cough or tuberculosis

The whole drama was mild and sweetly scented  
Designed for a Sunday evening that had been invented  
To gently close out your weekend leisure  
To end the week in comfort, entertainment and pleasure

Now we have another Doctor F  
One who would be shown the red card by a ref  
This foul-mouthed specimen, surname of Foster  
Belongs to the terrible actors roster

The drama features horrible people  
Who should be stuck at the top of a steeple  
Or somewhere else far away from the human race  
With their immoral ways, a waste of space

It set me thinking of how little we have achieved  
In fifty years and it leaves me aggrieved  
From being entertained and having a 'feelgood' glow  
Now we are soulless wretches with nowhere to go.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Frozen Fields

Train whooshing along snow-laden track  
No stopping now, no turning back  
Hurtling as if the destination could never be reached  
Through the Winter's defences that cannot be breached  
A calm buzzing and sizzling overhead  
The lines guiding us as sundry platforms fled  
Through fields of green although grass never touched  
Frozen stalks past whom the Spring has rushed  
Boughs and branches dreaming serene  
Of their precious clinging cloak of green  
Of sun-filled skies and perfumed breeze  
When unburdened of this desperate freeze  
When the joy and hope the seasons bring  
Will welcome unconfined the coming Spring  
When the fiery arm of the golden sun yields  
It's triumphant beam over frozen fields

Paul Gerard Reed

# Frozen Willow

Twisted bark of frozen willow  
The Robin's only pillow  
Worms no longer edible  
Ground impenetrable

Defiant call of thrush and blue tits  
Singing together as winter misfits  
Bird bath frozen to the brink  
No water to drink

Gulls and cormorants swoop low  
Over the North Sea icy flow  
Then huddle together in a flock  
On Marsden Rock

Paul Gerard Reed

# Fullness Of Time

"Tall oaks from little acorns grow;  
And though now I am small and young,  
Of judgment weak and feeble tongue,  
Yet all great, learned men, like me  
Once learned to read their ABC."

From 'Lines Written For A School Declamation' by David Everett, written for  
Ephraim H. Farrar, aged 7

Your adult thinking has been debased, hollowed-out  
By days of drudgery  
By defeats  
By worry that gnaws away  
And leaves wisdom a husk;

My mind is pure but quiet  
Like a stream set in grassy banks  
Wending its way devotedly, slowly,  
Not deflected from it's task,  
Not worrying about it's destination,  
But knowing it is set for a greater world  
In the fullness of time.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Future

The path ahead unmeasured  
Like a grey mare's tail in the breeze,  
The haze of the future unburdens gradually  
Taking us unaware at our ease;

Tomorrow's vast uncertainties  
Form shadows across our minds  
And, too afraid to hear the truth,  
We blink and pull down the blinds;

A sorrowful tear on departing  
We can only regret the past  
But boundless potential awaits us  
Filling the sails on the mast

Propelling our souls forward  
Interminably moving us on,  
Not hesitating, not faltering in stride  
To think about what has gone.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Geranium

I rest here on the kitchen window sill  
Safe from harm and winter chill  
I have been delivered here by loving hand  
A soldier from the human band;

He saw me flourish in warmer times  
My steady growth, my stem that climbs  
Saw me blossom, as is my duty  
Now repays me for my beauty;

He took note of my pink array  
That brightened up the autumn day  
My cheery show was his spur  
And he saved me for another year;

Now I rest amongst pots and pans  
Home-baked bread, cakes and flans  
I will wait here patiently for the summer rain  
So that I may pay him back again

Paul Gerard Reed

# Glimpses

Day dawns, day ends  
We can only glimpse happiness  
A fraction at a time,  
Our feet pass over life's ground so quickly  
No time to rest;

Not a luxuriant bathing of the spirit  
In sunshine days,  
We run from danger  
Run faster and faster  
Until we get old  
And can run no more,  
Content ourselves with walking  
But no running,  
Not any more;

Run in your mind  
To places past  
Once famous buildings demolished  
Where once hope was housed  
Where, glimpse through the fence  
We saw happiness inside  
Party songs and cheer  
And lively talk of tomorrow;

But now all we have is yesterday  
Yesterday, with it's drunken slur  
And faded pictures  
People who have slipped out of sight  
And dreams lost.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Glory

Now that the glory has subsided  
And all our efforts seem in vain  
The chill winds blow through our dreams  
And the stubborn doubts remain;

Now that the storm has settled  
The crescendo and the flurry  
Only fear reigns instead of peace  
And serves to magnify the worry;

The plateau of life has tilted  
To a sloping, slippery dread  
All the evenness of yesterday  
Lies careworn, dusty and dead;

But we must keep on trying  
To embrace and manage the pain  
To make our tomorrow worth living  
We must reach for that glory again

Paul Gerard Reed

# Go To B & Q

Why not go to B & Q  
If the things you want to view  
Include compost bags and hanging baskets  
Rubber seals and neoprene gaskets

Low energy bulbs and garden sheds  
Toilet seats and shower heads  
Six inch nails and cross head screws  
Mastics, adhesives, seals and glues

Paints, brushes and ceramic tiles  
Hammeers, chisels, sanders and files  
Grouts, mortars and quick-dry cements  
Tins of creosote for your fence

So when next Sunday  
You're at a loose end  
Go to B & Q  
For a ninety degree bend

Paul Gerard Reed

# Goat In A Hay Field

The wind ruffled stubbled hay  
The morning passed its cheery way  
When, through the hedge, a sound occurred  
The bleat of a goat without it's herd;

As I tried to gain a closer view  
The bleating got more insistent, the noise level grew  
And through a tiny gap, just as I feared  
I spied the fringes of a goaty beard;

Now the untrained ear may have struggled  
To decipher the message through the hedge thus smuggled  
But it seemed quite clear to me what he was relaying  
'Help! ' he seemed to be repeatedly saying;

I tried to ease his sense of fear  
I cried 'Don't worry, I am here'  
But his sense of human language was not as strong  
As my reading of his and what was wrong;

He looked at me as if I was daft  
And if goats could do so, he would have laughed  
To see such an earnest and concerned human face  
Trying to communicate with the goaty race;

I knew that his place was not amongst the cut hay  
That adorned the golden field that day  
But in the luscious green pasture that stood next door  
And over the fence he must have jumped before;

So I found the keeper of the animal paddocks  
I don't know his surname, let's call him Maddox  
And told him about the errant goat  
Who was bleating such an urgent note;

'Not that little blighter again,  
He should learn to stay in his pen! '  
And off he marched, in somewhat truculent mode  
To retrieve our 'Billy' from his mistaken abode;

Now I never saw him restored to field correct  
Because I was only there for a short while, you may detect  
To sample the breezy Yorkshire dales  
And perhaps a glass or two of it's hearty ales;

So i waved farewell to my goat with the bleat  
Who had laid his problem at my feet  
And, satisfied, knowing I had helped the little 'blighter'  
To a future perhaps just a tiny shade brighter.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Going Backwards On A Train

Going backwards on a train  
Is sure to confuse the brain  
Whose forward outlook is a feature  
Of the homo sapien creature.

Despite this, I remain keen  
To continually be seeing where I've been  
But it's hardly an occasion to rejoice  
For I have very little other choice.

The problem the carriage designer had to unravel  
Was where to place the seats relative to the direction of travel  
But he must have had a bad day, that day  
He decided to turn them the other way.

As a consequence, I'm going backwards on a train  
Sun poking through the clouds, but no sign of rain  
When I come home tonight, I'll write some more words  
And I hope by then to be going forwards.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Golden Coronets

The skies with golden coronets are surmounted  
Which have sent fleeting summer on it's way,  
Instead secret paths through woods to be counted  
Soft needles masking the mud and clay;

The transient days of heat now used goods  
Swirling leaves form shifting welter,  
Cloudbursts and umbrellas and hoods  
Running under the trees to find shelter;

The lingerers on the beach are grievors  
Their memories can no longer be bought,  
Gone, the heat hazes and dry fevers  
An irresistible freshness holds court;

Summer has held it's sale  
Of bewitching times the vendor,  
The hanging flags turn bloody and pale  
This is autumn in all it's splendour

Paul Gerard Reed

# Golden Horn

Already the Derby and Eclipse winner  
His reputation firmly in the forge  
But sadly, because it rained at Ascot,  
Withdrawn from the 'King George'

On to York and the Juddmonte  
His chance thought to be long odds-on  
The sweeping Knavesmire thought to be perfect  
For him to gallop upon

However the going became a worry  
Discussed and analysed oft  
Following the weekend deluge  
It was finally declared 'good to soft'

A pacemaker was especially entered  
To ensure an end to end stretch  
To rule out any false sprint finishes  
His name on the trophy help to etch

But little did they all reckon  
The chances ignored and unseen  
Of a sweet little bay filly  
By the name of 'Arabian Queen'

Par for the course after expensive defeats  
Reasons and excuses abound  
From being 'far too keen and fresh'  
To 'couldn't act on the rain-softened ground'

Perhaps there was an even better reason  
To explain this intriguing result  
He was simply beaten by a better horse  
The challenge too difficult

So, good luck Golden Horn  
When next on a racecourse seen  
You'd better keep a wary eye open  
Watch out! Here comes Arabian Queen!

Paul Gerard Reed

# Golden Years

You dont know it now  
But these are your golden years  
When your children are young  
And enquiring  
When thoughts of Summer days  
Dont occupy your Spring  
And Autumn is known  
But not envisaged;  
But the peace of mind you have  
Goes unnoticed  
And serenity is only a concept  
And memories not yet distant enough  
To take on a glow  
As they do when they were long ago;  
There is no answer to this  
The answer only becomes clear  
When the question no longer applies

Paul Gerard Reed

# Good Times

'I know times are getting hard  
But I know they're going to get better  
I can feel there's something in the air,  
Good times gonna come soon  
I just know they're there'

From 'Hold On', Kossoff, Kirke, Tetsu and Rabbit, 1971.

Why we trudge,  
Why we suffer,  
Why smiles remain bright,  
Because we need to pass on hope,  
To see interest  
Where others would see none;  
To develop an intensity for living  
That resists the rain,  
That masks the cold  
And sees tomorrow as an opportunity.  
To keep believing  
That good times are ahead.

And this is why  
We do what we do,  
To defy the harshness  
To light up the greyness  
To live life to the full  
In spite of the emptiness.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Goodbye My Friend

Thanks my friend  
For staying to the end  
For sharing those days,  
For transporting me  
Setting me free  
From my stubborn ways;

We weren't meant to be  
You and me  
Your clock said many miles,  
From the to and fro  
From the long ago  
And the worn-out smiles;

But your twilight song  
To me belonged  
We formed a team,  
An unlikely pair  
Forged alliance rare  
On time's endless stream;

The run to work and back  
Turned tight to slack  
Seals turned to shred,  
But you carried on  
With great aplomb  
No bitter words were ever said;

Now you are old  
The trail is cold  
It's straights and bends,  
No more entice  
Your sacrifice  
Here the journey ends;

Goodbye my friend  
This is the end  
Our paths must stray,  
But I won't forget

My solemn debt  
For your yesterday.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Goodbye Sweet Day

The grim, grey light of the smothered moon  
Rests in the crevices of the midnight garden,  
Usurping the daylight dreams and cares  
Watching the sly frost harden;

Night is here- goodbye sweet day  
That throbbed the blood through the veins,  
But now dispersed with it's guilty flow  
Over fields and down country lanes;

Gone is the world's emboldened stance  
Made upright by the lancing sun,  
Now covered with fear in the shadowy nooks  
Forgotten as night's tale is spun

Paul Gerard Reed

# Grantchester

Watch out, criminals, because you had better fear  
Robson Green (or 'Geordie' as he's known here)  
With his long raincoat, a bit like Columbo's,  
His cigarettes smoke twirling past his rather long nose;

Keating's his surname, bear it in mind with Rebus and Morse  
He forms an unlikely duo (with Vicar Chambers, of course)  
And his detective methods, being rather surly and gruff  
Are complemented by the Vicar's more compassionate stuff;

Romantic interest is provided on the side  
And Geordie begins a marital slide  
By inserting himself between the sheets  
With Margaret, his secretary, who increases his heartbeats;

Meanwhile the Vicar is also browsing the female pages  
As he's been attracted to Amanda for ages  
But now suspects her hubby to be back on the scene  
Leaving him distraught and his hair oil bereft of sheen;

To these crime-fighting heroes this advice I would lob  
Forget the women and concentrate on your job  
Then, when they arrest the next murdering bloke  
They could go to the Red Lion for a pint and a smoke.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Grass

Lonely blade of grass  
Amongst millions  
With the sun streaming down your face  
You are lost in all the others;

Lovely lush, soft grass  
Stretching out over the leas  
In autumn splendour  
With your thistles and clover  
You rest in the afternoon;

Lazy tide  
Not going out  
Or coming in  
Bringing, then taking away  
As the sun slips slower  
And the foam scrapes the pebbles;

Sitting on a bench  
Looking out over the sea  
Drifting the afternoon away,  
Lonely amongst millions  
Clover at our feet;

Day disappeared,  
Empty bay  
Nothing but night and silence,  
Our footsteps imprinted  
On the soft, lush grass.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Green Light

Why do people take so long  
To move away from a green light?  
Are they watching a re-make of King Kong  
Or last weekend's 'Big Fight'?

Is there something distracting  
On their dashboard or console?  
Is some task so exacting  
That they forget their immediate goal

Which is to move forward quickly  
To help the traffic flow  
To get those wheels turning slickly  
To help them get where they want to go;

The consequence of their inaction  
Is that they hold up the whole queue  
If they moved faster by just a fraction  
If they only had a clue

Of the disruption they are causing  
To others more awake and respondent  
By their semi-conscious pausing  
You make the alert despondent;

So, please, slow movers-away  
This is what my moan is about  
More reactivity please display  
And get your finger out!

Paul Gerard Reed

# Gullane Bents

Over the ridge  
Plunging down into the sands  
Legs stretched in joyous bound,  
Racing under a blue canvas  
That seems to stretch forever  
To the rushing waves sound;

Over the ridge  
Through a secret gap  
Where the sea buckthorn stops,  
Into a paradise of crashing sea  
Shells, sticks and pebbles  
From grassy fields and treetops;

Over the ridge  
Feet sinking, sand scattering  
Through the piled dunes defence,  
To our world of freedom  
To our hidden share of joy  
To the Gullane Bents

Paul Gerard Reed

# Hairy Bikers Cook Off

Dave Myers and Si King have just taken stock  
Of their programme of cooking against the clock  
For their 'Cook Off' series has just ended  
With many pans fried and mixtures blended

The studio audience gave it a blast  
They howled with derision if contestants weren't fast  
And shouted a little too loud perhaps  
When the time limits were about to elapse

With celebrity chefs the fun levels rose  
Cooking favourite dishes they had a few goes  
But it was the families who strained and competed  
Who added the edge as their fates teetered

On the brink of elimination, or worse  
As their pans boiled over and they started to curse  
As they realised they were going to be late  
'We can only judge what you put on the plate! '

They were challenged to make a quick festive feast  
They battled the clock but that was the least  
Of their worries, as their faces turned glum  
The '7 minute supper' was still a challenge to come

We saw undercooked rice and meat almost raw  
Such was the pressure of time that knocked at their door  
And Health & Safety wrote a letter not so tender  
'Someone might lose their arm in a blender! '

But all emerged unscathed at the end of the day  
The pots are washed and the pans put away  
With not one accident over which to linger  
Everyone still has all their fingers

So the next time you're in the kitchen remember  
Forget the Bikers rush in December  
Forget the clock and be ever so  
Safe as you take your time and cook really slow

Paul Gerard Reed

# Happiness Is Just Around The Corner

Happiness is just around the corner  
Where sun-dappled streams tinkle like bells  
And the morning breeze caresses the fells  
Happiness is just around the corner

Peace of mind is just a thought away  
Where the hovering lark talks to the sky  
And the gentle rain lets its teardrops cry  
Peace of mind is just a thought away

Paul Gerard Reed

# Happy Childhood

Funfairs, ferryboats, steam train rides,  
To stand and admire the incessant tides,  
Picnics, birthday cakes, midnight feasts,  
To treasure that regarded the least;

Holidays, open fields, joyous spree,  
Playing, hiding, climbing the tree  
Each different season, each morning light  
To feel warm and safe at night;

To be free, without fear or foe  
To be strong, to develop, to grow,  
Celebrate victory, endure defeat  
To recognise that both make you complete;

To see the magic, compassion acquire,  
To encourage, to nurture, to inspire,  
Feel the rush of the truly great  
To unshackle, to unbond, to liberate;

To learn to love, to live, to know  
And the greatest thing I could bestow  
Not wealth or power or purple blood  
Just the gift of a happy childhood

Paul Gerard Reed

# Harsh Winds

The harsh winds pierce  
And show winter's fangs fierce  
Across the cold grey mottled sea,  
Spume's blown sharp sword  
Thrown in icy discord  
Shaking the leafless tree;

Slashing tide crashes  
And harbour wall lashes  
The startled gulls disband,  
The frozen landscape yields  
It's sweeping defeated fields  
To the winter's icy hand

Paul Gerard Reed

# Hartside

We stood atop the peak  
And gazed out upon God's patchwork  
Bounded by dry stone walls of unerring line  
Stretching away beyond the horizon  
And thought of all this as a green cape  
Thrown down by nature to welcome us  
And reassure us that greatness still exists  
In field and vale

Paul Gerard Reed

# Hawthorn Dene

The April afternoon  
Dared us to enter this secret place  
Closing the lids of sad eyes  
To capture memories in our floodlit minds;

Where a quiet symphony praising spring  
Whispered soft caresses as it took us in it's arms,

Where the wild garlic,  
Arranged like a green-woven tapestry  
Of perfect rows from nature's loom  
Clothed the slopes from naked display;

This world of brooks and streams  
That held the sunlight's sparkle  
Gurgling and dancing down steep ravines,  
Where cares ceased to be.

Paul Gerard Reed

# He Had It All

My boyhood days  
Stood on crumbling concrete tiers  
Amongst the gathered mufflers and caps  
The brave hope against the inevitable;  
Intoxicating aromas of pipe smoke  
Bovril and it's wisping steam  
Carried away into the winter sky;  
The bright piercing of the floodlights  
Holding the night at bay  
And shining on the pitch green, so green;  
But most of all, the roar  
When Wearside joined together and pooled emotions  
And fused the sound that rose from the belly, through the heart  
And out through throats to shake the very air  
With a mighty reverberance that trembled the cowering  
And stirred the blood,  
A noise like no other;  
This land where a hero is forever  
And a legend a little longer,  
This land that you walked away from  
To what you thought were greener pastures  
In more important places;  
You could have been a hero  
You could have been a legend  
And now you are nothing.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Health

The body is full of things that can go wrong  
Like heart and lungs and pulses not strong  
Like parts that ache and shake and quiver  
Like the fever you get and then the shiver

There are many components, all linked together  
Doctors and surgeons don't really know whether  
To disconnect them and try to insert new  
Or leave well alone and see how we do

We're bombarded with advice and statistics  
From the NHS and even from mystics  
About Body Mass Index and things not to eat  
Then three years later say we're not complete

Unless we fill ourselves with the very same stuff  
That just previously they'd advised us as 'duff'  
To jog very slowly when before it was 'run! '  
To never eat more than five sticky buns

In a period of five consecutive days  
Unless you also eat them with cranberries and Crème Anglais  
In equal proportions but beware, even then  
To lie down after you've eaten them and count slowly to ten

The consequence of all this, is that we've become nervous  
About our health and the National Health Service  
Should we all call the doctor, or just consult the web?  
When we wake up and find ourselves at a low ebb

Should we go running through the casualty ward door  
When our worries reach a peak and we just cant take any more  
Or should we just lie down and put the blankets over our head  
Then wait 'till the morning to see if we're dead

Paul Gerard Reed

# Here

Here, where the sun shines strong  
Into creases on people's faces  
And the light is so pure  
With it's Arctic traces;

here, where eyes are bright with cold  
And with the hope that primes  
The gazing to the future  
And to better times;

here, where the air swoops clean  
And beckons the mind to clear  
The rawness that fills ears and mouth  
Making sorrow disappear;

Here, where shadows cast long  
And the dark shapes' edges mingle  
And the lark song swells the sky  
Over rocky sands and shingle;

here, where the seas have lain alongside  
For a hundred thousand years  
The rolling, scrubby grasslands  
With their rugged yellow furze;

Here, in the brave summer  
Where clouds of goldcrest throng  
Here, on the precious leas  
Here, where I belong

Paul Gerard Reed

# Hit The Heights

The sun hung high  
In bold blue sky  
As we danced under the dazzling light,  
We had found a way  
To gain the best from the day  
As once more we hit the heights;

The morning rose apparelled  
As the skylarks carolled  
Over the wheeling gulls white,  
Their soprano shrill  
Surmounting earthly thrill  
As once more we hit the heights;

All the jigsaw pieces  
From history's creases  
Fell together to our gladdened sight,  
Each moment distilled  
And eternity filled  
As once more we hit the heights;

Each recollection cherished  
Was re-embellished  
And polished 'til clear and bright,  
The bonds between us renewed  
And with new hope imbued  
As once more we hit the heights;

Treasures rediscovered  
Buried memories uncovered  
As the dust scattered in flight,  
Granted another time  
To set seal on our rhyme  
As once more we hit the heights;

An old book re-opened  
And from yellowed pages moribund  
Old lessons re-learned that we might  
Be fulfilled with their power

Through this sacred hour  
As once more we hit the heights

Paul Gerard Reed

# Holey Rock

Glum under your sand-ridden mud  
Your remnants stand jealous  
Your face once jutted out like a prow,  
All those feet that once here stood  
You bore their weight before us  
But your ledge is only wind-swept now;

They ran amongst your toes  
They found your secret caves  
They hid in the ventricles of your heart,  
But the blast that came to end your woes  
Swept your boulders into sea-tossed graves  
Tore your mazy innards apart;

Now the widened beach lies strewn  
Empty with only pebbles to carry  
A piece of the past has flown,  
Your towering guardian rudely hewn  
No longer a place on the tops to tarry  
This rock that we once called our own.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Home

With brave faces set against the blast  
We tread the rain-spattered coast,  
With tightened grip we hold on fast  
And cling to this fierce host;

On this harsh and unforgiving ground  
Ruffled feathers of seagull flocks,  
There is no bleached idyll to be found  
In these storm-scraped rocks;

But the crashing sea clears the head  
The chilling air sweeps and restores,  
The stark moon climbs the stars to it's bed  
Over these silvery shores;

Where the seas crash and winds blow strong  
The whipped-up sands amassing,  
This is what we have, where we belong  
Home-bound footprints mark our passing,

Paul Gerard Reed

# Home Sweet Home

Your bricks and mortar  
Stand ragged but proud  
As you wait for me to come home,  
Not knowing where I am  
But loyally you wait  
Wherever I might roam;

Your front door  
Greets me with open arms  
Welcomes me joyfully back,  
Then closes behind me  
The end of the line for the world  
On it's outside track;

Your roof defies the rain  
With aging tiles  
Shielding each one of us below,  
Keeping our laughter safe  
Held in beneath  
Absorbing the moon-glow;

And the garden  
My magic place  
My haven of peace and hope,  
At one with nature  
Restoring our minds  
So that we may cope.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Home Tonight

THE MOON is a wavering rim where one fish slips, □  
The water makes a quietness of sound; □  
Night is an anchoring of many ships □  
Home-bound. □

From 'Home Bound' by Joseph Auslander

I set my compass towards home  
And each step is a joy,  
A magnet for my soul;  
The doorstep beckons  
And the threshold invites  
Tonight.

What greater achievement  
Than to build a happy home?  
For to live without it  
Is to be cast adrift,  
Anchorless,  
To be at the whim  
Of the mighty waves;

Go home tonight  
And look forward to it,  
Enjoy it;  
Relish the surroundings  
No matter if they lavish  
Or humble be;  
I will go home tonight  
And be me.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Homework

We listen and learn  
Through our minds things churn,  
We read and we write  
Sense and knowledge unite;

We add numbers together  
Make letters evenly spaced,  
Frown as we get tired  
Slowly innocence is replaced;

So while the clock is still ticking  
Before the fall of sun's ray,  
We will put those pens down  
Let's go out and play!

Paul Gerard Reed

# Hope

'WHEN by my solitary hearth I sit,  
And hateful thoughts enwrap my soul in gloom;  
When no fair dreams before my 'mind's eye' flit,  
And the bare heath of life presents no bloom;  
Sweet Hope, ethereal balm upon me shed,  
And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head.'

From 'To Hope' by John Keats

A tuneless whistle, a nameless flute,  
A listless breeze blowing nowhere,  
A breathless sigh made tamely mute  
Absorbed in the morning air,  
Lost spirits drifting slowly away  
Holding cruel despair at bay;

What use is today without tomorrow?  
Which promise scarce thrilled a heart?  
What use is joy without it's sorrow?  
Each on their own still forms a part,  
So as I slowly descend the slope  
Gently lift me back up with hope.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Hopscotch

The eager hand released it's grasp  
Abandoned the smooth grey stone  
Leaving it to fate unspoken;  
It seemed to hang in the air  
Undecided, unsure  
It's link with safety broken;  
The pebble landed on its edge  
Cartwheeled for a second  
Scarcely glancing at the numbers beneath;  
We held our breath and waited  
Watching the stone find its way  
And the destination it would bequeath;  
Suddenly a pirouette, a sharp turning  
An unexpected veer  
A kind of drunken walk;  
The stone settled on the path  
In unchartered no-mans land  
Beyond the scribbled chalk;  
The same we find with life's game  
We have to let go and risk  
Brave the forthcoming unknown;  
Then watch helpless as the fates decree  
Hoping that they will be kind  
As childish things outgrown.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Hordes Of Faces

A rain-spattered Saturday  
Light slowly fading  
Shop lights beginning to burn,  
Empire Theatre copper dome  
Standing green in the gloom  
'The Lion King' about to adjourn;

Hordes of faces  
Passing me by on either side  
Their pallor as of a ghost,  
All on their way to somewhere  
Somewhere they might get to  
If not all the way, almost;

People talking, joking and walking  
Defying the feelings inside  
Grandly touring the street,  
But inside disappointment churning  
Another long, despairing day  
Another bitter defeat;

I stand and watch next to a gravestone  
All broken down and forgotten  
But in faded letters, a seed,  
For I can make out chiselled yesterdays  
Long-lost yesterdays  
And the magical name of 'Reed'

Am I a descendant?  
Am I a loved one?  
Standing under this grey sky,  
None of the people can see me  
They just keep on walking  
As their ghostly faces pass by

Paul Gerard Reed

# Horse In A Field

I stand in a field  
Unnoticed by everyone, except you  
I munch the grass alone  
Taste the morning dew;

I lift my head as you pass  
On your silent course  
Our eyes meet, I recognise in you  
Someone who loves the horse.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Horses

Breath, blown hot into the chill air  
From a heaving ribcage under straining girth  
Steam rising in curtains over sweat-stained backs  
The heat of the skin despite cold earth;

The heightened rush, tautened sinews,  
The headlong dash, the shouts and the din  
'Come on, today is the day'  
The surging, the wanting to win;

The ruined dreams, the missed chances  
The abrupt crash and the fall  
The getting up and starting again  
The impossible glory of it all;

Towering above all these peaks  
Running through the veins on it's course  
The nearness to the blood and the tears  
The chance to stand next to a horse.

Paul Gerard Reed

# How Fast The Time Goes

The aisles are full of fluffy snowmen  
Village scenes under glass  
That snow when you shake them  
Until the storms pass,

Electric candles with conspicuous wires  
That only give them away,  
Or glow-in the-dark signs  
'Hooray - It's Christmas Day';

Trees with unlikely branches  
Set at regimented angles  
Not natural-looking at all  
Just for baubles and dangles;

Boxes of powdery snow  
For throwing at spruce and fir  
Selection boxes with chocolates  
They couldn't sell the rest of the year;

Bare-branched modernistic contraptions  
With decoration cut to the bone  
Toy trains that race around and around in circles  
To destinations unknown;

Reindeers that burst into song  
When you push a certain button  
Cotton wool to wrap around things  
Lambs from last year's mutton;

All these things raise the spirits  
And bring back those Yuletide glows  
Is it really a year since the last one?  
It's here again, how fast the time goes.

Paul Gerard Reed

# How Good It Is To Be Alive

Nature is here this morning

Wrapped in the air all around,

Through the tree canopy awning

Songs of birds abound;

And whither my feet go

Whatever view I take,

I bask in the afterglow

Only inner joy can make;

A setting made for happiness

In which peace and hope can thrive,

Where carefree minds assess

How good it is to be alive.

Paul Gerard Reed

## How Long Is A January?

How long is January, you ask  
Because it seems an endless wait till Spring  
And the days when every little thing  
Seems so much better;  
How long can a month run on tired legs?  
Some say thirty one days, no more  
Eleven days and a score  
Expressed another way;  
Too long to the next pay day  
When Christmas has extracted its ravages  
And like savages  
We roamed around the shops  
Blindly spending money we hadn't got;  
But what the hell  
Although our finances are on the skids  
Christmas is all about the kids  
And their turn will come  
When they have to pay  
For their kids and then find  
Themselves singing this song  
January is much too long

Paul Gerard Reed

# How Lucky We Are

This busy life, lived so closely  
This earth we have been put upon,  
Bound together as if one,  
From breaking light until the fade  
The blackbird's evening serenade,  
How lucky we are;

With open minds and open hearts  
Rushing rivers to the sea,  
We were all meant to be,  
In this tempestuous phase  
Hurtling through the days,  
How lucky we are;

So time has it we must grow old,  
Together we accept our fate,  
With no loneliness to contemplate  
Or regrets to mull,  
Only fond memories full,  
How lucky we are.

Paul Gerard Reed

# How Many Highs

How many highs have you taken me to?  
Cares unfolded that had been compressed,  
The battle against sadness  
So exquisitely expressed;

It was good to know  
That it was something I could share,  
The realisation of what it was  
Made it easier to bear;

And even now, with the battle won,  
With love and happiness found,  
I have come through it all  
But remain haunted by the sound;

We are not allowed to have heroes  
With finger pressed on fret,  
But the magical notes created  
Still reverberate yet

Paul Gerard Reed

# How Much?

How much do you love your life?  
How much each day to start anew?  
Tomorrow could be good or bad  
In the end, it's down to you.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Humdrum Days

Give me some humdrum days  
Where I can watch the time while away  
Watch the river flow  
It knows where to go  
To the sea  
Feel the breeze in my hair  
And the day grow tired gradually  
Without regret  
The birdsong fill the morning  
And the tide rise up the beach  
Just out of reach  
Let the days pace slacken  
And the flood ease to a trickle  
And sentiment so fickle  
Get washed away

Paul Gerard Reed

# I Am A Boat

I am a boat, drifting through life  
Looking for a safe port,  
I am the rocks upon which I founder  
Forgetting all I was taught,

What is it we seek, is there a prize  
Is there something to rely upon?  
Is there one vast meeting place  
Where life and love can go on

Paul Gerard Reed

# I Am In The World

I am in the world  
I was born today  
Along with my brothers and sisters  
Some black, some white, some grey

Into a world of water  
I was crudely thrust  
And instinctively swam to the surface  
Where I spotted dust

That might just be food  
Caught in the tank light's glow  
But I was too vulnerable  
To the older fish below

So I stayed hungry and swam lower  
And hid in the greenery  
And patiently bided my time  
Whilst admiring the scenery

I grew afraid when after a while  
A big blue scoop appeared  
And swept me up and out  
Into a safe net to be reared

Along with my thirty-odd siblings  
And now we dart and glide  
In a fascinating pattern  
As we slowly find our stride

In this world of filtered water  
And gradually gather our strength  
Until we are of sufficient size  
Sufficient breadth and length

To survive back in the big tank  
Back amongst the bigger fish hurled  
But for now it's enough to know  
That I am in the world

Paul Gerard Reed

# I Found You

By some miraculous chance  
Tightening the guy ropes of fate that had slackened  
One Friday night in November '76  
As the South Shields skies blackened

Our eyes first met and locked gaze  
How little then did we know  
That our lives were to be entwined  
Nearly forty years ago;

Did an invisible hand  
Straighten our paths so askew  
Was it always destined to be  
That I was meant to find you

Paul Gerard Reed

# I Look For You

I look for you  
Even though I know it is hopeless  
I close my eyes  
And i still look for you;

Where have you gone?  
Is it forever we are apart  
Why can I no longer see  
The one that made me.

This is the ground  
That you walked on  
This is the town  
You saw and loved

I look for you  
Especially when the twilight comes  
For that is the ending of the day  
When I search;

Will I ever find you?  
Can we talk once more  
Is there something still to happen  
Or has it all gone before.

Paul Gerard Reed

# I Won'T Stop

I ride two-wheeled around the place  
With my hi-viz vest and helmet atop  
I swerve the torrid rush hour race  
For I'm not one who has to stop

I won't halt at traffic light request  
And all engines with my pedals outscore  
For they are merely second best  
The queues I just ignore

The red lights glow for others  
But not for the chosen biking few  
They cars stop, they are not my brothers  
I just freewheel straight on through

The rules of the road weren't made for me  
They're not relevant, they don't apply  
I am a quite separate breed, you see  
And I just go sailing on by

I apply the same rules when on foot  
I won't wait in a straggly line  
Not for me the tedious rut  
The blistered feet or creaky spine

So make way, you drivers and waiters  
Your courteous progress I disavow  
We are the unruly 'wait in line' haters  
To the impatient cyclist, take a bow

Paul Gerard Reed

# In The Room

The withering wind blows clean from the Pole  
But unable the sunlight to trounce,  
The Spring, once again will make us whole  
As shivering crocuses announce;

And, although we wrap warm and huddle in groups  
We feel the change in the air  
Although we drink hot coffee and soups  
We can feel that it is there;

A lifting of mood, a sensing of hope  
A feeling that good days are near  
A reassurance that we can finally cope  
And banish the Winter's fear;

And all that is left of times that have gone  
Is a darkened memory of gloom  
For even with his hat and coat on  
Spring has joined us in the room.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Influence

A gift is the chance  
The lives of others to enhance  
To tell a tale and sing a song  
To remember what made the evenings long  
To see eyes open wide, excited  
As far-off lands are sighted  
Tales not from a computer screen  
But born from the thread between  
To tell all that you have learned  
When you got your fingers burned  
But how you have since grown strong  
Singing your wondrous song  
So take the time and spread the glory  
Of your unique and splendid story

Paul Gerard Reed

# Inside The Factory With Gregg Wallace

Fresh from his efforts on 'Masterchef'  
Where his 'shouty' voice would leave you deaf  
Gregg Wallace is now touring factories  
His television viewers to inform and please;

One interesting place he found to linger  
Was the home of the humble Bird's Eye fish finger  
And through the factory on his plod  
Gregg spied frozen blocks of compressed cod;

Every week through the door came over a hundred tonne  
Which left our intrepid reporter visibly stunned  
&quot;Wow! &quot; exclaimed Gregg, clearly astonished,  
&quot;That's a serious amount of frozen fish! &quot;

Then, through processes many and scattered  
Cut into fingers, floured and battered  
Finally bread crumbed and put into packets  
Launched at the supermarkets' 'saver' price bracket;

Not content with that, Gregg trooped off to Gloucester  
Where he joined the Ribena roster  
To be submerged in tonnes of ripe, black fruit  
Which left purple stains on his boiler suit;

His round glasses and hairnet seen by the nation  
He gathered himself for his next exclamation  
He yelled, looking rather like the factory cleaner  
&quot;That's a serious amount of Ribena! &quot;

Then in poured a billion pellets of plastic  
Which might seem to you and me a bit drastic  
But they go to make recycled bottles by the boatload  
To forklift onto trucks to go on the road;

To get to their destinations in a manner hasty  
With their payload of blackcurrant juice so tasty  
Gregg confirmed, shouting loud enough to make you blink,  
&quot;That sure is a serious amount of drink&quot;!

Paul Gerard Reed

# It Is I

It is I who travel in the winds,  
It is I who whisper in the breeze,  
I shake the trees,  
I shake the earth,  
I trouble the waters on every land.

'Dream Song (Ojibwa) ' - Native American Anon.

Do not fear  
For it is I  
I, who you know  
Lives in the sky  
I, who look after you  
Hidden deep  
In the sky of blue  
Fear not  
For it is I  
Who lives above  
In the bright blue sky.

Paul Gerard Reed

# It Once Was Mine

So it has come to this,  
You are being led away, away around the corner  
Where I cannot see you  
Where the light doesn't return your gleam  
Where you will never be seen;  
A parting of the ways  
A sorry goodbye with heavy heart  
Yes, it has come to this  
We are now apart;  
You once bore the weight of my writing  
My collected thoughts safely stored,  
My records that no-one will pore over  
That no-one but me will miss;  
But now where you stood an empty space  
A nothingness of void, no trace  
And though I call out to you  
You are no longer here  
Just a gap in the stratosphere,  
Be gone, be gone now and quick!  
For my eyes do not want to see  
Where you used to be  
And where you are going,  
For the pain I feel, I wish we had never met  
My dear departed filing cabinet.

Paul Gerard Reed

# It's Ok

We talk in hyperbabble  
Out of our human face  
We can land a space probe  
On a comet out in space;  
We are in an information revolution  
But we constantly wear a frown  
Because the internet is frozen  
And the emails keep going down;  
When it rains for half an hour  
The roads all flood and swell  
It takes three hours to travel ten miles  
Through traffic jams as well;  
We cant handle viruses  
Our nerves stress and fray  
The economy is smashed to pieces  
Apart from that it's OK

Paul Gerard Reed

# Jamaica Inn

We settled down in anticipation  
Of a period drama that might grip the nation  
We simply couldn't wait for it to begin  
Yes - Daphne Du Maurier's 'Jamaica Inn'

But the introduction seemed unacceptably slow  
And someone had turned the lights way down low  
Worse still, the dialogue was hard to make out  
With everyone mumbling and shuffling about

What rubbish it was, this appalling broadcast  
As our Sunday evening worsened so fast  
Surely Cornwall had so much more than clouds that scud  
Windswept hilltops and a load of mud

And no passing traveller could ever have craved  
To stay at a place that looked like a cave  
Dark and damp and no comforts to boast  
With an aggressive hard-boiled smuggler as 'mine host'

Devoid of interest and story, this so-called 'drama'  
Made it more thrilling to watch 'Panorama'  
Sorry, Ms Du Maurier, I have to give you a rap  
Your book might have been good, but the film version was crap

Paul Gerard Reed

# James' Sixth Birthday

This little gathered crowd  
Sitting earnestly  
With excitement barley held,  
On a Sunday morning  
Bleak and grey  
Here, just here, our pride dwelled;

For amongst those faces  
Smiling nervously  
Was our own true loyal blood,  
With innocence intact  
All together  
Here, just here, where my feet stood;

In that moment  
Dust swirled and circled  
And settled on each seat,  
But we had beaten time  
Made history  
Here, just here, our life complete.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Jigsaw

I can't see the end from here  
Or the beginning  
I am standing in the middle,  
Nothing in the past is clear  
More losing than winning  
The future just a riddle;

What was once, is no longer  
A different place  
For our nephews and nieces,  
The world weaker not stronger  
But moving at quicker pace  
A jigsaw with no pieces.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Just For A Day

What would it be like  
To be the breeze,  
With nowhere to go to,  
Just for a day;

To peep out from under  
The dark calendar  
Of dates and deadlines,  
Relieve the groaning strain  
Of the ropes of life;

What would it be like  
To not grow old,  
To be swept along  
By good will and kindness,  
To be released  
Just for a day.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Just Me And You

You reminded me  
About how things should be  
When I had started to run out of hope;  
Why should my hopes expire  
When yours never tire  
And life is on that upward slope;

Lets start afresh  
Let our twin spirits mesh  
Lets take life on anew;  
Come hold my hand  
Across the breadth of this land  
Lets win again - just me and you

Paul Gerard Reed

# Just Passing Through

Like the breezes that swirl through the trees,  
Like gliidng clouds in skies of blue,  
Like the mornings that turn into evenings  
We are just passing through;

Time eases sleepily through our fingers,  
Evades each desperate grasp anew,  
We pause for a while but he moves on  
Keeping us passing through;

Our children find gradually what we know  
Our grandchildren yet to construe,  
That together we form a coupled train  
All of us passing through;

Like boy, like man, like wized oak  
As the years and the ages accrue,  
We are travelling on our speedy journey  
We are just passing through

Paul Gerard Reed

# Just The Way It Goes

The past is the dust  
Settled in the grooves of records  
Undisturbed, unplayed,  
Stored safely away  
As youth began to fade;

How I listened  
In melancholic adolescence  
As the black vinyl spun  
Scratching and crackling  
At a story just begun;

The needle of time unlocks  
A faint, wistful voice  
Soulful and reflected  
On a nostalgic, lonely shore  
Washed up and dejected;

Every note forlorn  
An echo of glorious years  
Sung in yesterday's limelight  
To those who might listen  
On some future night;

The 'White Lady'  
She heard Beck's call  
Of silvery, slick notes, crowded  
Arcing between the streetlights  
On a foggy night enshrouded;

'Everybody-Nobody'  
That appealed to my sadness  
And, in hollow love,  
Flew to my teenage heart  
Like a terrified dove;

And, at last we came  
To the final solemn track  
Which summed up all my woes

The needle gently lifted  
But that's 'Just The Way It Goes'.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Killiecrankie

'An' ye had been where I hae been  
Ye wadna been sae cantie-o  
An' ye had seen what I hae seen  
On the braes o' Killiecrankie-o'

From 'the Braes o'Killiecrankie' by Robert Burns

In the dim corners of my mind  
I recall the day I went to Killiecrankie-o  
That day the rain drew down it's blind  
And the weather blew it's nose on a hanky-o

But burnished in my thoughts, in Nature's forge,  
The red leaves gathered down the banky-o  
On it's steep and lonely wooded gorge  
That runs through Killiecrankie-o

And, if the days I could count  
Since that day at Killiecrankie-o  
They would come to a large amount  
For which the Lord I truly thanky-o

But my eyes are ageless when they envisage again  
That view at Killiecrankie-o  
And that grey sky with all it's rain  
That dripped from the leaves on the banky-o

And one day I will return  
In the rain the river dranky-o  
Not for long I hope to adjourn  
My going back to Killiecrankie-o  
My going back to Killiecrankie-o.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Kind

Stone may erode with the crashing waves  
The road ahead, never straight, will wind,  
Crooked the path it often paves  
But I know you will always be kind;

A flame that can never be extinguished  
Forever a safe place you will find,  
From others with hard heart distinguished  
I know you will always be kind.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Lament For A Gerbil

Eyes shut;  
No more to open  
Whiskers still;  
No more to twitch

Just a little life  
No more to caper  
Beneath the earth  
Wrapped in kitchen paper

Day over;  
No sun to shine  
Cage still;  
No wheel to turn

Just a little life  
No more tomorrow  
Beneath the earth  
Wrapped in sorrow

Paul Gerard Reed

# Lanercost

At an end, our ragged journey through  
The hustling, excited crowd  
But fate had it we would come to you  
And with your serenity be endowed;

Where hands of masons, chilled by moorland air,  
Now long dead, but having left their mark  
Through their empty windows of sightless stare  
And ghostly shadows in the dark;

Seven hundred years later  
Our longing eyes drift over the fields  
The beauty of the views cater  
To the love that our heart yields;

These worn stones wear the ages' grime  
But fashioned by trusting skills  
Still thread through the tunnel of time  
To cure our modern ills;

And the sheep graze on, unknowing  
Of the dramas and sorrows past  
The winds over the moor still blowing  
Their sonorous and mournful blast.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Lard

You never see adverts for lard on TV  
I asked myself how could this be?  
Lard, I know, is not a substance sublime  
But still proved vital during the wartime

Now it seems lard is out of fashion  
Since the scrapping of the ration  
And now we are obsessed with all things 'low fat'  
That seems to be the end of that

How about sponsoring a lard revival  
After all it helped survival  
During the dark days of World War Two  
Without it there might have been no 'you'

So abandon silly phrases and no longer utter  
That you still cant believe it's not butter  
Instead lets play our high-fat trump card  
'One of your five a day - a pound of lard! '

Paul Gerard Reed

## Late Rose

You hold your head high in defiance  
With beauty to match the ragged thorn  
Though rocked by harsh blasts and gusts  
My humble border you still adorn

Your pure and delicate fragrance  
My veiled and wearied thoughts accost  
A sweet and sensuous nosegay  
As if to revive the summer long-lost

I know that all this is temporary  
But, like the slanting autumnal sun's rays  
Your moment is to be cherished and treasured  
To carry me through the darker days

Paul Gerard Reed

# Laughter

Laughter is the best medicine they say  
Worth more than any wealth  
Laughter is a wonderful tonic  
Not available on the National Health

Laughter keeps us from growing old  
And from senility premature  
Laughter is a gift from our youth  
When life was sweet and pure

Keep laughing as much as you can  
To keep on an even keel  
Dont take life so seriously  
And see how much better you feel

Paul Gerard Reed

# Leave Sorrow Behind

We wait until all things are still  
And a glorious and guiding hand settles gently  
We stand becalmed in the glow of the moment  
That we have waited for so fervently

We know again that we are in the midst of creation  
And that a greater force is still kind  
And when that moment has silently drifted away  
We can leave our sorrows behind

Paul Gerard Reed

# Leaves In The Wind

I read that Jimi was your hero  
You searched in vain to emulate  
All the time supremely unaware  
It was you that was really great

Ever searching for a 'sound' like his  
When there was no need at all  
Instead, unknowing, your fingers touched  
My soul with vibrato squall

'Trouble on Double Time' and 'Woman',  
'Mr Big' and 'Mouthful of Grass'  
That big hole in the ground that you wanted to dig  
Grew deeper as I watched the time pass

I still listen with adolescent shiver  
To the piercing cry of sunburst Les Paul  
I still walk in your shadow  
From the garbage cans of the back street crawl

The unreachable high that you craved for  
Carried with it too high a price  
The heroin stream in your veins  
Always the last throw of the dice

Much too soon you took that final flight  
With wings that could no longer fly  
With 'Tons of Sobs' you left me  
No forgiving or word of goodbye

The last verse never to be played  
A curtain that can never descend  
Fretboard growing dusty and shabby  
Wishes I can no longer extend

Perhaps you can still hear me play you  
Through strings that know more than just sound  
Heavy heart muffled but still beating  
As that last flight touched the ground

Paul Gerard Reed

# Let Us Laugh

Let us laugh  
For laughters sake  
Let us laugh  
Till our bellies ache;  
Let the tears  
Roll down our cheeks  
Let us laugh  
For weeks and weeks;  
Let us laugh  
Till we can laugh no more  
Let us laugh  
Till our bellies are sore;  
Let us laugh  
With lack of inhibition  
With happiness unconfined  
With a joyous disposition;  
Let us laugh  
All night and all day  
Let our laughter  
Wash our sorrows away

Paul Gerard Reed

# Let Us Not Be Dismayed

Let us not be dismayed  
By the wintery things displayed  
Whilst rigours and hardships abound  
Beauty can still astound  
Us with it's ravishing cloak of gifts  
That optimism and spirits lifts  
As we cast a mean eye aglare  
Across the frozen meadows stare  
The cold dew that has hardened to frost  
Melts as if the Summer did accost  
And leaven the burden of bare twig and branch  
Of whitened fence and railings blanched  
To restore in our private minds review  
Glorious flower and skylark anew

Paul Gerard Reed

# Library

Here they stand, in long lines  
Shoulder pressed to shoulder,  
Unmoving, patient, steady  
Waiting for the fire of human knowledge  
To leave them in ashes;  
I stand amongst the collected rows  
The rank and file of thoughts  
All standing still and dead to the world  
Gathering dust and broken spines,  
Yellowing and damp spotting,  
And, at some unforeseen moment in the future,  
Useless to anyone;  
Dead weights, closed faces, inward looking,  
Read and forgotten,  
Memorised but drifted away  
The sweat that produced them  
Evaporated and gone;  
Imprint them on your mind  
Take solace from the lifelessness  
Daring only to whisper  
In the silence.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Life Happened

From the days of youth and then contentment  
With excitement easing down a notch or two  
Maybe a bit slower into the bends of life  
But still not in shades of blue

But nothing lasts forever so they say  
Things change out of all recognition  
Gone are the days of forward planning  
Up the steep hill of ambition

What happened to change all of this?  
What made it all go to pot?  
Then the answer was whispered to me  
'Life happened, that's what'

Paul Gerard Reed

# Lilac Tree

Come and join us under the lilac tree  
Share in our games and fun  
Where blue skies rest on our shoulders  
Where our day has just begun;

Come and join us under the lilac tree  
Where all our races are run  
In this heavenly garden  
Under the setting sun;

Come and join us under the lilac tree  
Where our freedom is born  
At the very start of our lives  
Where cares have not yet worn;

Come and join us under the lilac tree  
Where the scented breeze plays in our hair  
Where we hold hands and dance around  
Come and join us if you dare!

Paul Gerard Reed

# Little Dreams

What has the soul to thrive upon?  
When days become mere intervals  
Between gathering nights  
When dreams are just the closing of eyes  
Until the gloomy morning;

What feeds the beating heart to flutter?  
And nurture it's naive promptings  
To be up and running  
With sheer joy just to be alive  
Until exhaustion beckons our rest;

I will suffer patiently  
And I will dream my little dreams  
With bedtime books,  
Hearty meals and warm clothes,  
Comforting thoughts and wishes  
Until spring bids me to start again.

Paul Gerard Reed

## Little Figures On The Tow Path

The Wear washed it's way through Durham as ducks with their ducklings  
Were swept over the mini ledges that form crescents in mid flow;  
Above the dense, swaying green of the trees the Cathedral peered down on us  
Little figures on the tow path, as with figures from long ago;  
Getting feet wet in puddles, measuring the gaps between the boardwalk slats,  
Feeling the rise of the embankments, testing tired legs;  
Spanning bridges, taking a breath, starting again,  
Squeezing some peace out of worried days' dregs;  
Remembering the last time we were here, circuiting the cloisters,  
Taking coffee and biscuits, sitting outside under a tree;  
&quot;If your enemy is thirsty give him drink&quot; we heard  
And the river ran on to the sea

Paul Gerard Reed

## Little Places

Serene is the world in little places  
Between the books on dusty shelves,  
In quiet nooks where no pulse races  
That no-one knows but ourselves;

Sacred is the corner of the garden  
Where even the breezes find respite,  
Where lungs can be filled, resolve hardened  
And all our troubles seem suddenly slight;

Wondrous is the window the rain spatters  
While we sit on the cosy inside,  
Listening to the thundery skies clatter  
As safely with our souls we confide;

Dear to the heart the glowing fireplace  
That bitter winds cannot tunnel and groove,  
Esteemed the security of the hidden space  
That the crowd pass by unmoved;

But of all such precious venues  
Retreats when life throws it's cruel dart,  
Is the hideaway just for me and you  
Where we hold each other in our hearts.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Little Things

In what unsmiling contempt we hold  
The beautiful little things,  
We lock them outside in the cold  
Prevent them spreading their wings;

Our true feelings are kept on shelves  
We forage forever elsewhere,  
We look at our vain-ridden selves  
But in our hearts we do not dare;

The magnitude of the smaller  
When under the microscope viewed  
Suddenly become much taller  
As our normal vision is skewed;

We favour the bigger and bolder  
As we look to immodestly gain,  
But as we grow steadily older□  
The little things entice us again.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Littlehaven

Littlehaven lies in the wintery harbour  
Waiting for shrieks and screams and laughter  
Waiting to reflect the heat off walls  
Into the blissful evenings after;

But now the sand whips up  
In silent whispers of biting edges  
Scraping the craters and ripples  
Blasting the outcrops, grazing the ledges;

Amongst the searing silence  
Under a sky that brightens and dulls  
The sun gradually slipping away  
Pitting deep shadows on rocks like skulls;

Bleary footprints leading nowhere  
Going around in rings  
Sifting away beneath the restless winds  
Under the sand that sings.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Lizard Point

Threads of grey  
Etched over the horizon line  
A wispy loom  
Set behind the dappled dark deep  
And under the great billows  
That fathered the rain

Behind and beyond  
Is the great burning ball  
Unseen but waiting for its moment  
Watching over the earth  
And holding it  
In slender fingers of fire

Paul Gerard Reed

# London

It's got Tower Bridge  
And it's got Big Ben  
It's got underground trains  
That run now and then

It's got river cruises  
It's got Trafalgar Square  
It's got Madame Tussauds  
And red buses to spare

It's got Cockneys  
And Germans and Japanese  
And trained announcers  
That say 'Mind the gap, please'

It's got Nelson's Column  
And it's got Hyde Park  
Full of grey squirrels  
Who eat nuts in the dark

It's got the 'OXO' building  
It's got museums galore  
Like the Victoria and Albert  
And the Imperial War

But my advice if you're going to London  
And all the sights to see  
Is take a good pair of shoes  
And an umbrella or three!

Paul Gerard Reed

# Look At Yourself

Look at yourself  
The one who tries to put a label on me  
And direct me in their direction  
I tread not in your garden  
And shape not your future  
I take no control over your affairs  
And am respectful of your ways;  
I dont worry about you  
Or fret over you  
But am mindful of your freedom  
As long as it encroaches not upon mine;  
I tread carefully my own path  
Which transgresses not yours  
My trees and branches grow carefully  
Inside my own boundaries  
And do not block your light  
My noise is quiet  
And within my own walls  
My voice is steady and belieinvg  
But does not shout at you to follow;  
I join in when asked  
But dont ask you to join me  
I share with my loved ones  
And they share back because they love me  
If there are any scraps left at my table  
I share them with you  
But do not ask you to share yours with me  
I do not come to your door for help  
Rather walking until I drop  
We are all made differently  
And I respect your differences  
Look at yourself  
Before you look at me

Paul Gerard Reed

# Looking On

You are looking over my shoulder  
At everything I see  
For, even as I get older,  
I'm not as wise as I should be;

Your hand is on my shoulder  
Pointing the way ahead,  
Urging me to be bolder  
Or to tread safely instead;

My blood once ran through your veins  
When you were put to the test,  
Now, even as the light wanes,  
You still want me to be best;

So together we will travel  
Until all the days are gone,  
Tomorrow and the future unravel  
With you still looking on.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Love Goes Beyond Reason

Love goes beyond reason  
Enters no rational argument,  
Love transcends the seasons  
Does not know abandonment;

Love crosses all borders  
It knows no edge or side,  
Love does not obey orders  
Is not carried by the tide;

Love is inextinguishable  
It heals the angry sore,  
With love all is accomplishable  
Supersedes all that went before;

Love is not afraid to speak  
Or hear it's message spoken,  
Love makes strong the weak  
Mends the heart that has been broken;

With love all is achievable  
Nothing that cannot be attained,  
Nothing given away irretrievable  
Nothing lost that cannot be regained;

Without love, life cannot be tasted  
No light can shine the way ahead  
Without love we are wasted  
Without love we are dead.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Love Letters

She types away in soulless repose  
With nerve-endings diluted by microchips  
Not on fragrant paper that hearts overthrows  
Or promises the kiss of lips;  
Her characters neat, but no longer outpour  
With excitement from fingers to pen,  
The time taken, the effort made, no more  
Remoteness taken over by then;  
Her hands can no longer feel or grip  
But just jab, poke, prod and paw,  
A forgotten feeling that time has let slip  
The soothing of ink can no longer explore;  
She will not write when she can swiftly delete  
Her innermost feelings cross out  
Why intone with blushing shyness complete  
When robots can kindness flout;  
Bring her the feather, the inkpot, the quill  
Bring her the scrawling, blotching and scratching  
Let her love on the paper overspill  
Wrap her soul in endless dispatching;  
Why write a love letter, leave the heart racing  
Send to giddy heights hidden emotions,  
Why write with life's pulsing throb a-pacing  
With all of it's mistakes and it's commotions;  
Leave her to space and backspace  
Leave her to bury her secret fears,  
Throw the sacred pen in the fireplace  
And let it leak away in tears.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Love Will Always Outlast Hate

The calendar hangs limp on the wall  
Dust gathers on every date  
Time has no effect  
Love will always outlast hate.

The clouds move across the sky  
Rain falls only to evaporate  
The day will follow the night  
Love will always outlast hate.

Anger is a timid flame to quench  
The appetite for conflict sate  
The earth keeps turning round  
Love will always outlast hate.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Lovejoy

That Lovejoy  
Now he was the boy  
Please grace Sunday nights again  
With mullet and white T shirt  
He was a racing 'dead cert'  
To get off with fair Lady Jane

This 'feelgood' escapism  
Never brought criticism  
Indeed the opposite was true  
Now replacing neuralgia  
I find deep nostalgia  
Bring back Lovejoy and crew!

Eric dreamed of owning a Harley  
But that Gimbert (aka Charlie)  
Soon put a stop to that dream  
Things got even darker  
When the number one barker  
Upped and left the dream team

But they chased after 'Tink'  
And before he could think  
They nabbed him and brought him back home  
And with beret on head  
Expressed regret to have fled  
And cursed his wandering syndrome

Take me back to Norfolk  
One again my antique luck  
To try, and see if I succeed  
And Lovejoy, with dark glasses  
Will find some horse brasses  
And sell at a price pre-agreed

Paul Gerard Reed

# Low Fat

Low fat diets  
Now we are told  
Are no good for you  
And we have been sold  
A misinterpretation  
And a huge one at that  
About how we should diet  
And swerve the intake of fat  
This is just another example  
On an almost daily basis  
Of misinformation we are fed  
By so-called medical 'aces'  
Who tell you one thing one day  
And another thing the next  
But still enjoy bumper rewards  
For their misleading pretext  
Now sugar is the new enemy  
Not to mention carbohydrates  
But don't blame me if you avoid them  
And your health disintegrates  
My advice would be  
Enjoy a bit of what you fancy  
But exercise moderation  
To keep your inner vibrancy

Paul Gerard Reed

# Lull

Here they are,  
In little groups of two or three  
In this strange boulder-strewn landscape  
Mainly of the future,  
But also of me;

Look under the lids of their blue-sky eyes  
And see the sun's reflections run free  
Bathed in goodness and quiet times,  
Living in this great land  
Next to the sea;

The essence is in the beginning  
In the dawning of the day,  
Gone all too quickly  
Because we are much too keen  
To enter the fray;

So they tarry here for a while  
Take the morning at it's full,  
For the peace that comes  
Is not in the rapids,  
But only to be found in the lull.

Paul Gerard Reed

## Many Clouds (A Tribute)

Our pleasant, harmless Saturday  
Filled with normal things, benign,  
Entertained by our chosen passion play,  
On the adrenalin we dine;

As we stood a safe distance back  
Sheltered in our existence, dull,  
You displayed courage that did not lack  
For our spirits wrapped in cotton wool;

On such a day, who could sacrifice all?  
Who would give their life away?  
Who would rise and then sadly fall  
With the ultimate price to pay;

You were to test endurance until it snapped  
Jump as high as we commanded,  
Reach the limit, with all energy sapped,  
Just because we so demanded;

Then with your job done, the challenge met  
The glory still too distant to be spied,  
With no hero's welcome or reception yet,  
You laid down on the turf and died;

For we can ignore the beckoning ridge,  
The mountain top is not for us to reach,  
A divide that we can choose not to bridge,  
Or our darkening souls to bleach;

So when tomorrow comes, wrapped in fear's shrouds  
And chances passing us by,  
Look up and see the name 'Many Clouds'  
Emblazoned on the sky.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Marks Out Of Ten

Why is it we mark ourselves out of ten  
We should give ourselves a bit of slack now and then  
We rate schools and hospitals and old peoples homes  
Holidays and airlines and even best seller tomes

Utilities also come in for a fair bit of flak  
Water, gas and electricity all under attack  
Then on the 'X Factor' we try to rate the singers  
We even historically rank the Wild West gunslingers

Maybe the whole human race should stand in a good light  
And someone come and arrange us in order of height  
If they actually did it, and I don't know when  
I should be OK as I'm five foot ten

Paul Gerard Reed

## Married Life

We rise in the morning  
To see the first light of day  
We kiss goodbye  
And go our own way;

But in the evening  
Again we are blessed  
With each other's company  
As we take our rest.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Marsden Bay

The ancient rocks looked down at us  
Their feet wrapped in seaweed slime;  
Does it mean anything that we stood  
By these contorted masses of lime?  
What is one evening  
In the vast expanse of time?

Who will remember this moment  
As our feet imprinted the sand?  
Who will know we watched the tides rush  
Over pebble, crag and strand?  
Does it matter that we glimpsed  
Eternity's outstretched hand?

Paul Gerard Reed

# Marsden Inn

As the top of the hill is breasted I see  
Icing sugar crests set on the surface of the swell  
The Marsden Inn standing proudly in the gales  
Sundays clothes drying for a spell  
Until the next crazed wind-blown shower.

Descending the slope and I meet the Leas  
With larks defying the stormy skies  
Hovering over the rich green sward  
And fleeing from my searching eyes  
Shrilling the promise of the coming Spring.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Maze

What is this maze we walk in  
With no way out  
Other than death?

What is this language we talk in  
With no truth spoken  
Only waste of breath?

Paul Gerard Reed

# Memories

Now that the dreary mornings are here  
And we struggle the net to escape  
Our naivety and blunders  
Through the pages of history gape

The breezes swirl the litter  
Of our memories round and round  
They rise briefly but then fall  
And come to rest without a sound

My heart is heavy this morning  
With the emptiness of what is gone  
The days that cannot be recaptured  
The fullness that is left as none

We are left here, you and I  
To pick up the pieces of the past  
To face the dreary mornings  
And find our peace at last

Paul Gerard Reed

# Memories And Mazes

Ah, the memories call me today,  
Those of the wild and comfortable,  
The dreary and the vivid  
But none stronger  
Then those of happiness and tears  
Garish colours and livid;

A reflective pool  
Holds undercurrents of the past  
Invading my thoughts  
With their ghost-like cramp and room,  
Descending the stairs  
Or rising to the stars,  
Held in bright sun or a morbid gloom;

Graveyards and beaches,  
Clifftops and screes,  
Peeling bells and silence,  
Fresh country breeze,  
The softest of rainfall  
And rare mountain air,  
All have made me stop  
All have made me stare;

But the morning has evaporated  
Into slumbery afternoon,  
The echoes of the great halls  
Drowned in nostalgic perfume  
Fraying the edges of the mind  
Ceaseless, the stop-start of the clock  
Winding down forever  
in it's eternal frock;

Slow bend the rushes,  
Fast rushes the tides,  
Low the river runs,  
High the hawk glides;  
The maze and the path  
Both have separate ends

In a devilled sanctuary  
That only remembrance sends.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Midnight Email

Who is this man  
Who sends the midnight email?  
What mind throbs with work  
With the sky grown pale?

What energy drives  
This outlook shorn of home?  
Scorns the safer paths  
Down which he could roam

What misguides this man  
To think that midnight effort  
Will not be drizzled away  
And leave the morn unhurt?

Discard peace and restful things  
For chance to dream spurn;  
Let the morning be enough  
For his struggles to return.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Miraculous Atom

A little known fact  
No matter if your brain you racked  
You could never have recalled  
(Although you're probably not appalled)  
You didn't have a chance to know  
That oh so long ago  
'Miraculous Atom' was a horse  
Who appeared on a 1947 racecourse  
And, far from being slow  
Had quite a bit of 'get up and go'  
His reputation was quite celebrated  
To the effect he was nominated  
As a horse potentially great  
And one to follow in 1948  
I read about him last night  
Just before I put out the light  
And I bet I'm the only one on earth  
Who lingered over that horse's worth  
So that's why I have written this to tell  
So now you know him as well

Paul Gerard Reed

# Model Village

This little world is happy  
And there are no wars  
Everything is restful and contented,  
No protests, no uprisings  
No tears, no fighting  
No malicious plans invented;

This village is Utopia  
With all that is good  
A place of serenity and peace,  
Why cant it be reproduced?  
Why cant it be real?  
Why can't the world's troubles cease?

Paul Gerard Reed

# Modern Tv Drama

When watching new drama on TV  
I have a useful notion  
Switch off the set immediately  
If the first scenes are in slow motion  
This will save you a lengthy spell of gloom  
And generally miserable viewing  
Far better to switch the kettle on  
And get that cuppa brewing  
Another hint to stop viewing  
Is when the colours are deliberately faded  
To try and create an eerie feeling  
But this just leaves you feeling jaded  
At the lack of plot intensity  
Which these techniques seek to camouflage  
The dialogue usually 'mysterious' at best  
And often mere persiflage;  
For dramas afflicted in such a way  
Under the label of 'atmospheric'  
Usually don't have a good story to tell  
And a grip that is less than mesmeric  
They depend too much on the Producer's 'effects'  
In order your interest to stimulate  
And all your keen anticipation  
Will rapidly coagulate  
Into a mush of tiredness and despair  
As you wish for the good old days  
When dramas just let themselves speak  
And Producers had simpler ways

Paul Gerard Reed

# Moment Of Freedom

When is the day  
When I will be set free?  
When will I hear the voice  
Calling out to me?

For now chained and bound  
My day like eternal night,  
But my hopes, low and grounded  
One day will take flight.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Morning Dew

The sky is set high above you  
And the daisies stud the heath  
In traces of morning dew  
The earth sits solid beneath;

Life only an endless quest  
For the beginning of a new day  
Each hour that passes the best  
As you go on your way

Paul Gerard Reed

# Mountain Stream

Arrows of sunlight splitting the blinds  
Fading photographs and chastening minds  
Lighting the corners of a forgotten dream  
Thoughts tumbling down a mountain stream

Sunday slides away gently, unobserved  
Leaving a dusk with purple edges curved  
Clinging to the horizon with gluey grasp  
Setting night's padlock on the day's hasp.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Mowbray Park

The Sunday afternoon was drifting by  
As we trod paths past arbors and nooks  
And found shade under trees  
Stood by lake and rippling stream  
An ice cream van with no ice cream  
Wondered about visitors from the past  
In old creased black and white images  
And how they spent their Sunday long ago  
When the empty air would have reverberated  
With their words and laughter  
And their stroll back home after  
Could they see us now retracing their steps?  
The dainty feet of happy grandsons  
Unfettered by such thoughts  
Climbing wooden ladders and sliding slides  
On dizzy roundabouts and park rides  
With pigeons busily fretting around  
Mallards dipping beaks but making no sound  
And over us hung the Sunderland sky  
With all those memories of years gone by

Paul Gerard Reed

# Mrs Gerbil

So strong were you in your disguise  
In that little world behind your bars  
But you spoke to me without words  
Because I took the time to listen

You waited for me and eagerly met;  
Your escape from prison for fleeting seconds  
You tasted freedom and safety and love all at once  
Daring to explore but wanting to be cradled

Trust gained is never lost;  
You trusted me eternally thereafter  
Believing the bounds were the worlds edges  
And not of my making

So passed the days until you grew old  
And no longer wanting to be free  
You slipped into your own nether world  
But still a part of me

Paul Gerard Reed

# Munchen In The Rain

So, you have not listened!  
You have ignored our plea  
The pitch is now glistened  
Under Mancunian rain-spree;

We told you to kick off at 6  
To get the match over quick  
Now we are in a right old fix  
Munchen-Gladback are feeling sick;

Now from Germany we are separated  
In Manchester, of all places  
We are far from being elated  
Undoing our soggy bootlaces;

We don't know what might have occurred  
The game might have turned out to be scrappy  
But you didn't listen, you never heard  
We are far from being happy;

But when we play the return fixture  
On our beloved pitch at Munich  
You will find an overpowering mixture  
To put hairs up your English tunic;

For if we have rain forecast for that night  
We will ignore all the hurly-burly  
We will drag you in at six o'clock prompt  
And kick off 90 minutes early.

Paul Gerard Reed

# My Feet Are In Winter

My feet are in winter  
But my mind is beside a gushing stream  
That plays amongst the pebbles and tree roots,  
Hides under the mossy banks  
And reappears, tinkling with joy  
As it goes on it's way.

A canopy of translucent leaves  
Form a collage above me  
Velveting the sunshine  
Through a green filter.  
And there are sultry sounds  
Of breezes through grasses,  
Alongside the stream's gentle whispers  
A blackbird sings happy notes  
Of contentment and peace;  
The sky is high with light  
And the earth is sleepy  
Under the afternoon glow;  
Time is standing still.

The distant hills beckon the walker  
To feel the freedom  
Of heaven's spaces above the tops;

But my feet are in winter  
And outside my window  
Snow is falling.

Paul Gerard Reed

# My Old Guitar

It has been with me for over forty years  
Most of that, admittedly in a garage  
And I never could play it  
My guitar-playing talent you could rightly disparage;

It only has three strings left of the original six  
And is badly in need of a tune  
'WISHBONE ASH' engraved on it with biro  
I used to strum it and croon

Way back in the seventies  
When Wishbone Ash were king  
But I must remind you that  
I could never play the damn thing;

In a concerted attempt to clear out the place  
And several journeys to the skip  
I ventured again into the garage  
To load the car for another trip

There it was, hiding away at the back  
In the most inaccessible place  
Behind tables and packages and bookcases  
Resting it's dusty face

Meaning forever to keep it  
I took it and hung it on a nail  
But within 30 seconds  
I emitted out a huge wail

For the guitar had slipped its moorings  
It's hanging place it had fled  
It plummeted vertically downwards  
And hit me on the head

Now that guitar held a lot of sweet memories  
Although I couldn't play a note  
It was a part of my growing up  
But I cast a deciding vote

Enough was enough!  
And though in my throat was a lump  
I shoved it in the back of the car  
And took it to the dump

Paul Gerard Reed

# My Tribute To Wogan

The radio would crackle with his banter  
When the skies were cold and black  
He got me to work on a Monday  
When my thoughts were for turning back

He kept me smiling with that Irish brogue  
And his tales of Janet and John  
When I felt like coming to a halt  
He kept me moving on

The letters from his 'other listener'  
And various other comments absurd  
Music that he knew I'd enjoy  
And some that I'd never heard

He steered me into a happy zone  
And into waters calmer  
With his funny tales about the 'DG'  
And Walthamstow Swimmerama

So farewell and bon voyage to Sir Terry  
My Monday mornings will never be  
Quite the same again without you  
I only have podcasts on my MP3

To remind me of the great broadcasts  
That you made in the nineties and noughties  
That steered me into my fifties  
From my thirties and my forties

Paul Gerard Reed

# Nest Builders

I took the old nests away  
When the days were cold and dark,  
But you came back another day  
For the lighting of new sparks;

Then high swooned the sun  
Over your tidy home,  
Hard the work done  
In that leafy dome;

Instinctively, without thought  
Without fear of tomorrow,  
Nothing stolen, nothing bought  
No great pools of sorrow;

A receptacle, a loving well  
To bring on life anew  
For a feathered breast to swell  
And sing a new song to you.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Never Hold The Phone Like That

Never hold the phone between shoulder and neck  
You'll do it for ten years and then say 'O Heck! '  
Your neck will go into spasm and you'll be in pain  
And you'll swear you'll never do it again

The problem then is that the hurt wont go away  
And you book in for physio the very next day  
He asks 'How long have you been holding the phone like that? '  
You say 'a few months' and he soon smells a rat

'I bet its more like ten years you've been using your shoulder  
To support the phone and as you get older  
The neck vertebrae get tightened and it's a cinch  
That the nearest nerve ending will feel the pinch'

The discomfort goes on and on and you can go  
For six months, even with regular physio  
In total agony, and of yourself you demand  
'Why the hell didnt I hold the phone in my hand? '

Paul Gerard Reed

# New Bridge

How many times have I crossed  
Your sturdy beams and steady road  
For all the years that we have lost  
You carried your heavy load;

The rusting bolts, the mottled green  
Standing stock still as the river winds  
Forged from steel, forever seen,  
Imprinted in our minds;

You were there before we came  
Awaiting our late arrival,  
Things had always been the same  
But now you have a rival;

For upriver new foundations rest and jut  
Interrupting the clear water,  
Placed, determined to stay put  
Sunderland has a new daughter;

Your centre section lies in wait  
Pre-fabricated and fashioned  
Strong and tensed to brave the spate  
With skilful hands impassioned;

The efforts from mind to paper to now  
For scraping of hands and blood that was spilt,  
The thinking of who, where, when and how  
We are the generation that saw you built;

The future eyes will take in your arc  
Whose minds will be inspired?  
Who will light you in the dark  
When days grow old and tired;

I hope you withstand the storms and squalls  
Overcome the tidal swell,  
Stand firm in the rise and falls  
New bridge, I wish you well.

Paul Gerard Reed

# New Ground

To plant the seed of hope in you  
That is my lofty aim  
To walk new ground and take all in  
And let you play life's game;  
To feel that surge of joy rise within you  
To let the eye see the earth unbounded  
To know that we are not forever trapped  
Or our feet eternally grounded;  
The whisper of the morning breeze  
Drowning in the silence  
The magical qualities of lake and peak  
Defying the mortal science;  
The gathered shoulders of ancient rock  
That under the skyline throng  
Giving birth to memories  
That will last a whole life long

Paul Gerard Reed

# Newcastle Central Station

The morning has arrived to settle it's scores  
Down-and-outs sit lotus in shopfront doors  
Raindrops gather in gutters with others  
Then are rushed along by their brothers

Night has gone with it's LEDs and whores  
Released from darkness the sky downpours  
The heavy clouds blind the weak daylight  
The city still with a sense of stagefright

A lonely placard announcing 'Real Estate'  
Flaps on a building not knowing it's fate  
Dark-circled imbibers of rough caffeine  
Murkily appear on the scene

Collars turned up with shoulders hunched  
Pavements splashed under foot and gravel crunched  
Black and multi-coloured umbrellas in equal number  
Heads under dry but still half in slumber

Within the cold husk of the Central Station  
The dry concrete receives approbation  
From feet wetted by rain and puddle  
As departure boards settle the muddle

Of travellers in groups with nervous laughter  
Thronging under cast iron rafter  
Or standing alone trying to look relaxed  
And not betray worried minds overtaxed

The weary prospect faced of steel on steel  
As miles ground out under the wheel  
Until at last their destinations reached  
And the gloomy morning has been breached

Paul Gerard Reed

# Newcastle For Sale

So 'Big Mike' has put the club up for sale  
Its goodbye from him to Geordies and Brown Ale  
And they reckon he only wants 400 million  
Not much when you've already got several billion;

But the hidden aspect that Ashley wants to ensconce  
Is that he doesn't want paying for it all at once  
No, if you fancy buying a chunk of Newcastle  
Mike could save you an awful lot of hassle;

Because you needn't pay for it all 'up front'  
You just need a deposit to stay in the hunt  
Then just pay Mike a bit at a time  
Over the next 36 months would be just fine;

A bit like when you buy a second hand car  
Perhaps you could trade-in Wolves or QPR  
Then drive off the forecourt with a sleek new model  
Buying Newcastle would just be a doddle;

However Mike does have other terms to make things cherry-ripe  
You can't change the shorts or the colour of the stripes  
But he'd be especially pleased, you might detect  
If the new owner were to name them 'Sports Direct';

So I'm off to the bank to ask for a loan  
And I hope Mike Ashley won't start to moan  
When I hand him a few quid, it'll just be a breeze  
With the balance to follow over several centuries.

Paul Gerard Reed

## Next Week...

Why does the BBC ruin the end  
Of a TV drama that our minds did bend  
For when the show ends with a poignant thought  
Over which our minds might have fought  
And the complementary music starts to drift in  
They go and put it in the bin  
Instead of leaving you to ponder and wonder  
In with details of next week's' prog' they blunder  
Drowning out the sad and wistful theme  
Turning it all into a bit of a bad dream  
So, BBC, listen here and please be told  
We don't need details of next week's episode  
Stuck over the end like a sticking plaster  
Trampling on our thoughts, a big disaster  
When what we want is to digest and reflect  
And next week's plotline only serves to deflect.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Nicolaus Silver

Nicolaus Silver...

You lie safely in your grave  
Unknowing of the fire you lit in my heart  
All the years since spent thumbing pages  
Hopes raised and dashed  
Pulses quickening  
That fire still rages;  
Yes, you started it all  
A race that can never finish  
Not erode with time  
Or the years diminish;  
For my love was pure then  
Borne of childish eyes that believed  
Without impediment or fear  
Or the bitterness of experiences;  
Those since that have stood  
At the threshold of my high altar  
Brigadier Gerard, Mill House  
Rock of Gibraltar;  
All loved  
But you were the first  
The one that started the hunger  
That created the thirst;  
And for all of the hooves that have hit the turf since  
Yours made the deepest impression.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Night Fog

The gears grind and fall into place  
The faces in the human race  
Faces no-one can recognise  
Cant read the message in your eyes

Morse code tapping out an SOS  
But most people couldn't care less  
Night fog like molasses  
Sun's surface burning gases

Card sharp, twister, grifter, con  
Nothing left to rely upon  
Shiny metal turned to rust  
Not one soul that you could trust

Paul Gerard Reed

# Night Sky

In her swirling cloak of stars  
The night hides her secrets  
And absorbs my wonder as I gaze;

For as longingly as I look  
Into the black distance  
Her eternal focus never strays;

She holds this little earth  
In solemn safety  
And balances the chances

Of my heartaches, joys and cares  
My luck and tragedy,  
My fears and romances;

I, helpless in ignorance  
Stand enraptured by her dance  
Her steadfast nightly pose

And look for meanings and signs  
For guidance and direction  
But can only see her twinkling toes

Paul Gerard Reed

# No Jacket Required

Too hot today  
Too hot for a jacket  
Put one on at your own risk  
You mightn't be able to hack it

When your armpits start leaking  
And you have to mop your brow  
Don't say I didn't tell you  
That the humidity won't allow

You to wear such a cumbersome thing  
Which is best for a chilly day  
No good for such clammy ambience  
Best to throw it away

Or maybe chop off the sleeves  
And make an impromptu 'gilet'  
Take off the lapels as well  
You'll still look OK

In your hastily-contrived sleeveless waistcoat  
With the stitching hanging out  
But people have holes in their jeans  
So what's all the fuss about?

Paul Gerard Reed

# Northumberland Plate

Now an era has been closed  
Lost forever, wiped out and gone  
The grand, green turf ripped up and disposed  
Just fragile memories to lean upon;

A course, a way to the finish  
A true test of man and beast,  
Left to the modern world to diminish  
Where history counts for the least;

Grey God, Tug Of War, Attivo, Irish lake  
Glimpsed faintly through time's mists,  
New Brig, Border Minstrel, Even Say, Outbreak  
The brave are now only lists;

Spare a moment for these heroes equine  
Plant celebratory kiss and give joyous hug,  
Think of their courage at the finishing line  
And what was lost when the turf was dug.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Not A Trace

We wage war  
With only a wisp of smoke  
Shout and scream  
A reaction to provoke;

We are unseen, a nothingness  
A phantom vacuum race,  
And when we are gone it will be forever  
Behind us leave not a trace.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Nothing

Take down the temples  
The palaces no longer enthrall,  
Unhinge the Royal gate  
For man, he knows nothing at all;

The mausoleums, turn to rubble  
The pyramids gather dust on a shelf,  
Not built to make better the world  
No, man built them all for himself;

We shout and scream amongst ourselves  
We wage war with only a wisp of smoke,  
Not to achieve lasting peace for the world  
But for a reaction amongst himself to provoke;

Dress in finery, look in the mirror  
To preen and feign we are good,  
Leave the important things to others  
For man, he never would.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Now

What better thing could life bring  
Than the carefree days of youth,  
No-one, not even a King  
Could have more power than our truth;

What could future days contain  
What adult knowledge or know-how  
What could ever be as good again  
As what we have right now;

What grown-up pleasure could comfort  
As much as this childish cloth we weave,  
What far-off promise would not distort  
Nor lasting joy achieve;

Leave us alone in our unclouded sky  
Let our bonds be strong and not sever,  
Don't ask us to stop or wonder why  
Let this happiness last forever.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Now Spring Is Here

Now I find amongst the season's sample  
Daisies, prone at my feet  
Waiting to be trampled  
Keeping their heads above the sleet  
In this so-called spring;

And the ancient soil we flail  
In a deck-chair of sun  
Then submerged in ice-cold hail  
Does it know spring has begun?  
In these changing climes;

The cutting winds make the daffodils  
Hang their heads in shame  
Their bloomed hearts blown from the hills  
With April to blame  
In this English tropic;

Such is spring, the winter's daughter  
The unaware and innocent  
Made for the slaughter  
With happiness so transient  
And who believed better times to lie ahead;

So withered our narrow hopes  
Who paid dearly the extracted cost  
Of the winter on the slopes  
And the cruel ground frosts  
Now spring is here.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Now That You Have Left Us

Now that you have left us  
In the autumn of our lives  
With youth all around  
As our old age arrives;

Now there is no-one left  
That was there at the beginning  
How strange it all feels  
To be losing a race we were winning;

Can we ever meet again  
Or does eternity our lives sever?  
How strange it all feels  
To be cast adrift forever

Paul Gerard Reed

# Oak Trees

I know little  
Compared to the aged mountains  
And the trees that blow in the wind  
For whence their wisdom came  
From the years that passed  
And their stature built gradually  
With a sureness that time imparted,  
My thoughts have been forged  
In the fiery kiln of a short lifespan  
With no time for reflection  
Or chance to re-enact;  
My steps have been uncertain  
And stumblingly taken  
In the knowledge  
That they cannot be retraced  
With the short future to be faced  
Where seasons pass so swift  
And the oak trees grow.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Ocean

Rain-spattered salty air  
Harshly flecks face and eyes  
Churning, grey vast solitaire  
Boiling cauldron on the rise

Squall and spume disputing  
Ancient rocks uprooting  
Tears and teardrops distending  
Tides and time never ending

Created in his glory  
Land and sea side by side  
Eternally receding  
Then returning  
Crashing the incoming tide

Paul Gerard Reed

# Offence

Not for me, to take offence  
The lips curled at some pretence,  
My path forward is straight and true  
No time to analyse you;

How rigid that mind is set  
To sample others with regret,  
Time wasted that could be spent  
To more positive thoughts be lent;

What exquisite finery, so deftly woven  
Cannot be unravelled and disproven,  
And far from wrapping, fully-clothed  
Left naked, and to the truth betrothed.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Old

The scales have tipped  
My decreasing steps  
Bound now by my age;  
My temper softened with wisdom  
Dulled with knowledge,  
Calmed from once insistent rage;

Now everything has a purpose  
When once there was none  
Gone, the aimless drifter;  
The haphazard route through life  
Straightened by evening  
And days that seem so swifter;

No longer the fancies of idle past,  
The wondering, the dreaming,  
Truth is set in it's mould;  
So fast time slipped the reins  
Bolting to tomorrow  
Now that I am old.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Old Clock

Old clock, you tick steady on the mantle  
Taking footsteps, first left then right  
One following endlessly the other  
Counting away the seconds through the night;

Old clock, you do not wander  
Though the days may be stormy or fine  
You march on slowly but remorselessly  
Following the same straight line;

Old clock, your mission is never ending  
Though skies grow black or snows glisten  
Your clockwork heart will still be beating  
When I am no longer there to listen

Paul Gerard Reed

# Older

You know that you must be getting older  
And things seem to be getting sinister  
When winters seem that little bit colder  
And you're wiser than the Prime Minister

Paul Gerard Reed

# Olympic Limerick

Now I dont know if you are like me  
But I don't like women's hockey  
But the one consolation  
In my televisual frustration  
Was to watch the closing ceremony

Paul Gerard Reed

# On A Bright Day

There is a morning when I wake  
And all is coolness around me,  
There are empty streets  
And there is no hurry;

Everything is settled and in it's place  
Cares and fears are put to one side  
Even wars; just for the day  
To sample the moment;

There is a hush and a quietness  
There is no excitement  
And wanting has abated  
There is just contentment;

There is no hunger and no tears  
No pain and injustice  
Only soft whispers of hope  
An even warmth on the land;

Floods dry and winds still  
The world is perched in space  
Having nowhere to go  
But only to rest.

Paul Gerard Reed

# On The Breeze

That first froth of excitement settled  
Holiday trips outward now returned  
Paths through woods bedraggled and nettled  
Year-start to year-end upturned;

Thorny branches have heads bowed  
Green leaves hide a golden tone  
Petals scattered, once so proud  
The carpet of daisies lies mown;

Nightfalls closing in all the way  
Vanished, the days spent at ease  
Clouds over the watery sun hold sway  
Summer has come and gone on the breeze

Paul Gerard Reed

# On The Pier

We were the only ones there  
To taste the salt-laden air  
To test our spirits brittle  
And in that vastness, oh so little;

To stand `midst the sea as it heaved and tossed  
Swirling around the mounds of souls it had lost  
It's shifting faces spewed and churning  
As if for some future calmness yearning;

It's molten anger turned toward us  
Pier-bound, helpless, anonymous  
And drew a leaden, heaving sigh  
As it's torrents passed us by;

For wrapped around us with invisible grace  
A steadying hand held us in place  
And as the winds went on their way  
We survived for another day.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Once

'Old age remembers every misty distance  
The brook the boy once loved; it's scent of flowers  
Comes wafted from it yet with sweet persistence  
And builds again for him those vanished hours'

Extract from 'Places' by Thomas Gold Appleton.

I was a boy, once  
Long, long ago,  
The cares of the world  
I did not know;

I remember those times  
With sweet affection,  
I go back there often  
Again make the connection;

There is a place in my mind  
Devoted to those childish rhymes,  
That still sings my boyish songs  
Still lives those precious times;

And I am going there again  
You cannot stop my travel  
Your adult binds  
I will loosen and unravel;

To my open heart and innocence  
I return as aged and wise,  
With my burdens of life  
That I so despise;

Leave me to my pretending  
Leave me to my play  
Leave me to my return journey  
Back to yesterday.

Paul Gerard Reed

# One Last Swig

The sun slanted through bare trees  
Forming zebra-stripes on the grass  
Empty branches shifted in the breeze  
Over ground glued in sodden mass;

Poking hardy froth of plants still seen  
Through debris of leaves and twigs,  
Drinking of Summer's juices green  
One last despairing swig;

The path ahead ridged and displaced  
By tree roots' underground lance,  
Their search for water traced  
Like footsteps in a hidden dance;

And, drifting from over the hill,  
On the wings of the sooty crow  
Playground laughter and trill  
That uplifts the spirits so.

Paul Gerard Reed

# One More Day

Let me have one more day of this glorious life  
When so many others have faded away  
May I continue this existence you have given me  
Maintain my place in the fray

Let the wind blow free through the trees  
Let the mountains stand proud and tall  
I will never close my eyes to them  
Until you say I should fall.

Paul Gerard Reed

# One More Try

O, were it just like the good old days  
With the steep summits to be climbed  
When the sun left a golden haze  
When all of the melodies chimed

But now the peaks seem unattainable  
The backdraft of the passing years sweeps by  
The things strived for are unavailable  
Is it worth just one more try?

For my mind abhors despair  
My tongue still speaks words of hope  
My lungs take in great gasps of air  
And with my spirit elope

To tomorrows of unbounded joy  
And the meaning of being me  
To arrive at the safe and sacred place  
Where all things are meant to be

Paul Gerard Reed

# One Year Old

From shaky beginnings  
And with furiously-beating heart  
I opened my life's innings  
I stood at the very start;

Fate has guided my path  
To end in these tender hands,  
I lie gently in the aftermath  
Looking out over grassy lands;

For now I know who to rely upon  
From being lost and cast away,  
The clouds of yesterday have gone  
Tomorrow is a brand new day.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Options

Who decided we all need options  
In that vast chasm called the brain  
Options are for people who can't decide  
And change their mind again

Paul Gerard Reed

# Our Own Little Worlds

We are all sitting tonight  
In our own little homes  
All across the world  
In every city and town and village  
All wanting the same thing  
All wanting safety and love  
Whether we know it or not  
Whether our minds deceive ourselves or not  
We are all together, yet all apart  
Because we make it so;  
We are all sitting tonight  
In our own little worlds

Paul Gerard Reed

# Outsider

The mists have drifted away from the old street lamps  
The echoes of our shouts have died in the wind,  
The grass has grown again where once trampled  
As if our glorious past to rescind;

Standing here in this sacred place  
With it's hidden alleys and narrow streets,  
Looking back through the lens of time  
Shop windows full of childhood treats;

The ground I once thought was mine  
As I fearlessly sought out youthful danger,  
Now trodden with nervous gait  
A face not known, a stranger;

A growing-up that no-one knows  
The making of the man, the rover,  
The excitement, the hope, the mud-caked knees  
The football kicked over and over;

The park still there, but not a magic den  
Where once the years rolled over to please,  
The running through now leads to nowhere  
Only emptiness glimpsed through the trees;

Quickly take me home, to my new home  
Where my loved ones gather round me and play,  
Where I belong, not the bleak outsider  
The forgotten man of yesterday.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Overlapped

Where no home belongs  
But cold, bare walls  
That let the wind whistle through,  
So the year for this time longs  
When all the leaves  
Have dropped and blew;

In dark valleys and shelters  
Where night pierces and invades  
The smallest gaps  
So our souls are wracked and smote  
Where pain and fear  
Have overlapped.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Paths

Weary feet tread the same path  
That marks the way of life  
Generation after generation  
Down the same road  
History repeating itself  
The same fears, the same hopes;

Our feet scorch the earth  
Wear down the ground  
Leave a trail  
For those that follow  
And those that choose not to follow;

But amidst all of this wayfinding  
No-one learns from past mistakes  
Or if they do, they make a mistake  
In another direction  
And have to bear the pain again;

Does our path go round in circles  
And is destined never to get anywhere?

Paul Gerard Reed

# Peace Of Mind

I see a faint light at the end of the gloom  
An opening door show the way out of this room  
The smoke is still dense, but clearing  
The future still far away, but nearing;

Happiness is all that I crave  
To fear, not be a devoted slave  
Contentment is my only goal  
To come and soothe my mortal soul;

I do not ask for riches or power  
In this, my most challenging hour  
Just for the world to be more kind  
And give me back my peace of mind.

Paul Gerard Reed

# People In Coffee Shops

People in coffees shops  
Often stare into space  
As the rest of the world goes by  
Setting the pace;

People in coffee shops  
Order drinks that they don't really like  
But they sound impressive  
To the man on his bike;

People in coffee shops  
Sip at a cup that's too large  
They talk about philosophical things  
Including Nigel Farrage;

People in coffee shops  
Opt out even if just for a while  
They cross their legs and turn around  
Practice their false smiles;

People in coffee shops  
Don't mourn their money lost  
Paying far more than for coffee at home  
Which is a fraction of the cost

People in coffee shops  
Think themselves a little Parisienne  
The women tell silly jokes  
Think they are comediennes;

People in coffee shops  
Eat far too much cake  
And wash it down with more coffee  
In a cup that could hold a small lake;

Eventually people in coffee shops  
Reluctantly get to their feet  
Sigh a little wistfully  
Leave and walk back down the street.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Play Ground

The high-pitched shrieks and noisy shouts  
With giggles and laughter all about  
Rough barks and frenzied screams  
Fair maidens held in dreams  
Super heroes with villains to rout;

Sounds drifted to me through the belt of trees  
Like joyful strains upon the breeze  
Run, chase, catch some more  
Magic sword-swipe and dinosaur roar  
Bringing evil foes to their knees;

And all about me in the park  
Tendered to me age-defying spark  
That over my eyes cast a glaze  
A wondrous vision of my childhood days  
When I was there and played 'til it was dark;

And I thought how lucky they were  
To be thrust along with life the spur  
With all to play for and all to keep  
Joys to feel and dreams to reap  
If only our youth could reoccur;

And though I walked further and further away  
Their excited games seemed to still hold sway  
And followed me until at last I reached the end  
The noise died away and silence did mend  
Leaving me suddenly old again that day.

Paul Gerard Reed

## Portillo On The Rails

Michael Portillo's his name, he's a nice chap  
Always has Bradshaw's guide on his lap  
As he travels up and down the track  
Asking questions, getting answers back

When he gets off, he tightens his laces  
Then stays in some really strange places  
His quest - to see Britain by train  
Then probably go back home again

Paul Gerard Reed

# Preston Park

The removal of the current gloomy shroud,  
A momentary glimpse of the joyous past allowed,  
To run over soft grass, fed by the sun,  
Knowing that our day's work was done;

An unexpected slippage of the seismic plates,  
A brief respite from the cruel fates,  
Light shone through a pin-prick, a tiny perforation,  
Scorching a hole in duty and subjugation;

A day spent together as the minutes unwound,  
Carefree we ran, towards the evening bound,  
A dewdrop of happiness in a cold, grey sea,  
A memorable day that was meant to be;

To rest against a tree trunk that had survived the wrath  
Of winters and wars and the aftermath,  
A solid foundation on which to build upon,  
For it will still be there when we are gone;

And the gentle slopes caressed our feet,  
So used to harsh and unforgiving concrete,  
The glass house with walls collecting the light,  
But soon to cool 'neath the drape of the night;

The eager boaters, launched unafraid  
To sample the waters that eddied and swayed,  
The picnic cloths cheerfully spread askance,  
For the family feasts prepared in advance;

Such innocent pursuits under peaceful skies,  
A goblet of hope slurped in surprise,  
Before we return to the disordered affray  
And left behind this untroubled day.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Pride Of England

No well-won trophy to display  
No raucous celebration,  
Emptiness has won the day  
A hollow feeling in the nation;

For what would these men do and die for  
When all riches already belong  
What sort of defeat would these men cry for  
With their worldly comforts strong?

There is nothing to lose but pride  
Which is as free as the breeze on a hill  
For this, far better men have cried  
And swallowed the bitter pill;

What further reward could be sought  
What new dragons could be slain  
With pockets already bought  
And sheltered from the rain;

For these young men are stars  
With nothing left to be proved,  
Cushioned from life's scars  
With all the pride removed.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Purple Thistle

We walk under Summer's last fiery blaze  
Trail defeated legs through the shabby days,  
But between ears of corn and sheafy frond  
Your purple crown has been proudly donned;

Underpinned and guarded by spine and prickle  
To ward off careless suitors fickle,  
A shimmering globe, a violet star  
To tempt the thrumming bee from afar;

What further witness need we bear  
To display the honour of the narrowing year?  
A final fling, a majestic cap  
Forged from the fruits of your milky sap;

Not deserving of shallow praise, or hearts to bleed  
Dismissed by many as mere weed,  
Whilst my glad gaze stops and rests in awe  
At the beauteous sight that is before,

Other jaundiced eye could never scan the field  
And see the treasures that each may yield,  
Blowing time on the season's sad whistle  
The glorious, unheralded purple thistle.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Quiet Places

In my garden  
There are quiet places  
That no-one else looks at  
But I do.

No-one can enter the little places  
But worms and bees and butterflies  
They don't notice me  
As I look.

I stand and soak up the peace  
The nothingness in human terms  
This space that exists nowhere else in the world  
But here.

There are leaves  
That shiver gently in the breeze  
And which will be gone  
In the autumn.

There are thorns  
Guarding the rose  
Sharp and menacing  
But not to me.

I caress the unopened buds  
The holders of the future  
Tomorrow's hopes  
All tightly held.

I can go to these places  
At any time of night or day  
Absorb the serenity  
And free my mind.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Quirke

Another psychological and chilling drama

Full of men's worst work

Yes, wave goodbye to 'feel good' Sunday evening

And watch the new series called 'Quirke'

Paul Gerard Reed

# Rainfall

Slithering between the green soldiers  
With fastidious precision  
The rain inveigles the tiny spaces  
Like fastening minute bootlaces  
Between each blade of grass  
And enters the soil;  
With further toil  
The dampness penetrates lower  
And refreshes deep roots  
Who, with dry boots  
Had been parched until now  
Set free, they drink thirstily  
Stiffening the bough  
And quenching the leaf  
As minerals are captured  
And the earth, enraptured  
Is restored once more

Paul Gerard Reed

# Ravensbourne

Closely gathered doors off the hallway  
Is how I remember home  
A kitchen for baking  
With bread dough rising by the fire  
And a bedroom of books and toys  
And football strips and posters  
A mass of bricks and tiles that was a castle  
And a haven to hide in  
With the view down the Avenue  
Paul's Scarlet Climber nestling safe in the front garden  
The back garden fleetingly Wembley, then Wimbledon  
Then anything at all  
That a young mind could fill with his imagination  
A rotting greenhouse but still stood proud  
With aromas of tomato plants  
A vegetable plot with frost-bitten sprouts  
Gathered on a Sunday morning for lunch  
From the rich and fertile soil  
Who could have wished for a better place?

Paul Gerard Reed

# Rear Window (Starring James Stewart)

Rear Window

It was directed by Hitchcock  
And he hardly ever blew it  
So I looked forward with relish  
To this film starring Jimmy Stewart

Perhaps not his most famous role  
When you look at his acting past  
Sat the entire length of the film  
With his leg in a plaster cast

Starring opposite him in a classy frock  
Was the stunning and delectable Grace Kelly  
Yes, the one from High Society  
Another great film off the telly

But this one, set in a New York courtyard  
Apartments overlooking all angles  
And Stewart found himself fascinated  
By people from their windows dangled

Incapacitated and with nothing to do  
Stewart looked out through his 'binnocs'  
At the strange antics of his neighbours  
In the opposing apartment blocks

But the thing that really struck home to me  
Was how readily Stewart dismissed  
Kelly's sustained romantic approaches  
Remaining impervious to being kissed

Surely he could have grabbed his chance  
To stop being an overt 'peeping tom'  
Abandoned his restrictive plaster cast  
And got it on with that blonde sex bomb

Then Stewart could have cut another notch  
On the post of his old bedframe

And conveniently forget for a few minutes  
The injury which had made him lame

The other point I wish to make  
Is why did all those '50s New Yorkers  
Never bother to draw their blinds  
And flounce around starkers like porkers?

Did no-one have even the slightest sense  
Of maintaining a little privacy?  
Were there no discreet people in New York  
Who drew their curtains before having their tea?

Hitchcock must have been eternally grateful  
For such laxness in staying low profile  
For without it his film would have been sunk  
And Stewart, even if more agile

Would have had nothing intriguing to spy on  
As he reclined in his high-rise lair  
And Grace Kelly might have had more of a chance  
Of getting laid when she climbed up his stair

Paul Gerard Reed

# Red Leaves

The leaves have turned to flame red  
Wishes have become defeats  
Over now, withered and aged,  
Bright eyes peer dulled  
Through a pall of smoke  
Where once the fire raged;

We run on the spot  
No longer bound forward  
With stride as light as air;  
What we once took for granted  
Didn't even look for,  
Is no longer there;

The sunny curving pathways  
Between the trees  
Lie littered with broken dreams;  
Now a straight descent  
At unrelenting pace  
Tumbling down the mountain streams

Paul Gerard Reed

# Regrets Of A Man

So you thought I was a god  
And now you know I am just a man  
From the boy, from the pram,  
But you made me a god in your minds  
You made me what I am;

You stare now and mock from safe quarters  
But you too could have been a god  
If only you were not just men,  
If only what I know now  
I had known then;

You put me in a bubble  
And expected me not to float  
Of course I flew away,  
Now I have landed with a bump  
And yesterday became today;

I have made my mistakes  
And I will be punished  
You will treat me differently now,  
If only I had known then  
What I know now.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Rejoin

Now that the storm seems to be over  
The dust has settled and the air is quiet  
Now that the drums have stopped beating  
In the vacuum after the riot;

Now that the anguished times have slipped by  
The blackbird ceased his alarm call  
Now that we have come out the other side  
Could this be the end of the struggle and fall?

Has life now taught us a big enough lesson?  
Will a smile be allowed back on our face?  
Can the rigid shackles be unbound and loosened?  
Can we rejoin the human race?

Paul Gerard Reed

# Remember

Enjoy the remembering of days  
When kinder thoughts our minds accost  
The little corners to which the memory strays  
Of times abandoned and lost;

Think back and hold the thread  
Feel warm in yesterday's glow  
What happened then can never be dead  
Although it was long ago;

For our very soul and being  
Is made of the past, it's joys and sorrows  
Looking back is also seeing  
The truth of our tomorrows.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Retire

O, how I wish I could retire  
And throw this desk in a field!  
How I wish my work would expire  
But my future seems tightly sealed

In a trap with no escape  
With only drudgery in store,  
How I wish I could leave them all agape  
And walk right out that door

Paul Gerard Reed

# Return Journey

With no knowledge we set off, naïve  
Our future forever and a day,  
In every little thing we believe  
The ending seems so far away;

Who cares about tomorrow?  
When today offers all the gifts,  
A hideaway from all the sorrow  
That heart and hope uplifts;

We bask in the currency of days  
Our life force set at fever pitch,  
Swamped in our endless youthful ways  
In the future we are rich;

Then, abruptly, we are brought to a halt  
We tread water, catch our breath,  
Our feelings go into a somersault  
We are brought to acknowledge death;

Our excited gallop up the hill stops  
Nonplussed, we turn around,  
A chill breeze sweeps the tops  
And we descend without a sound;

Now we see things in a different light  
The faded roses with petals torn,  
Now mellow colours invade our sight  
Steadfastly ignored from being born;

The outward thrill is past and spent  
And life's lesson been made to learn,  
Our invitations are stamped and sent  
For the ancient journey of return.

Paul Gerard Reed

# River

I am not there,  
But the river runs its course, still  
With no heed of me -  
So unimportant to the world,  
While it delivers its ceaseless cargo to the sea;

O, to have such a task  
And to carry it out to the full  
With simplicity and purpose,  
Single-minded in its resolve  
Undeterred and unflinching,  
Plotting a true course;

Never turning back,  
Moving forwards  
Forever.

Paul Gerard Reed

# River Swale

The steps down carved in dried mud  
With edgings of timber  
Tree roots laid bare  
Ready to ensnare unsuspecting ankle;  
Under dappled shade we threw stones  
Aimlessly  
And collected others  
The two brothers alive with excitement;  
The river had seen it all before  
And knew more than them;  
We bade farewell to a branch  
Dislodged from the riverbank  
And now with no time to thank us  
On course for a new life  
Who knows where?

We knew we too might never be here again  
And breathed in the sweet air of the moment  
Listened to the tranquil rush  
Of the waters  
And unconsciously marked this day  
In our memories

Paul Gerard Reed

# River Tyne

Drizzle spattered the dark Tyne  
Running its evening course between waterside lights  
Jetties and ferry landings  
The last place of safety before the vast North Sea  
No more a powerhouse of shipyard invention,  
Riveters and platers;  
Colliers long since rotted  
Coals turned to ashes  
The red glow extinguished by cold modern times;  
Apartments now stand rigid by your banks  
With slivers of light through blinds  
And muffled TV sounds;  
Fishermen still stand on wooden decking  
Leaning on rails and talking  
Straining their eyes against the twilight  
Water lapping beneath their feet;  
Tug boats still ply now and then  
And cargoes meander without urgency  
Life still goes on;  
But the Tyne remembers more exciting days  
And yearns for their return

Paul Gerard Reed

# Robin Hoods Bay

The dreary sky belied your charms  
As we cautiously stepped that day  
Into the warm embrace of your open arms  
Down the path and along the bay;

At last we found you there  
Waiting, sleeping, hidden for so long  
A forgotten Friday, hung in the air  
Over the secret place where you belong;

Where waves have crashed and gently foamed  
Against your slopes and cliffs severe  
With hopes held tight we fondly roamed  
We finally found ourselves here.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Roker Park

We wandered by the boating lake  
On a Sunday afternoon  
With crocuses fringing pathways  
For the daffodils just too soon  
And felt a calm tranquillity  
As the sun slipped ever lower  
The ducks looking for bread and scraps  
The grass yet to see a mower  
The happy yells of children  
In sand, on slide and swing  
Holding hands and daring  
To feel the coming Spring  
We were happy for that half hour  
Spent in the deepening dark  
To let the afternoon slide idly by  
As we walked around Roker Park

Paul Gerard Reed

# Roker Pier

You lay there, waiting for us  
In the tranquil sun-sparkled water  
Sleepy and embedded  
In your stoney hauteur  
Sunday morning spilling over you  
In all of it's glory  
Ice creams and coffee  
And a chat and a story  
or two:  
Worn stones and pebbles  
To be collected and prized  
Remnants and debris  
Which time has devised  
Should lay on the beach;  
A chocolate labrador  
With close spaniel friend  
Rusted balustrading  
Reaching all the way to the end  
Of the pier;  
Steps chained off  
Fishermen by their rods  
On their folding canvas seats  
Waiting patiently for a codling  
Or two;  
With bait tins and radios  
Swopping earnest tales  
Of harsher spummy days  
And blistering gales;  
A gentle lapping at your sides  
Green seaweed bobbing in the foam  
The harbour a temporary haven  
An uneasy home;  
Guardian of the 'cat and dog' steps  
Memories draped along the coastline  
Like Grandad Reed sat on the beach  
On a long lost day, equally fine  
In a black and white photograph  
All of those Sundays ago  
Before I was born

Before time washed slow  
And smoothed the pebbles

Paul Gerard Reed

# Rooftops

The cold air swept along the streets  
It's desolate call, a numbing sound  
Our time was set for two o'clock  
When we would gather all around

The Vicar had been worried  
About how many would be going  
But in the end the Church  
Was filled to overflowing

My view was limited  
At the side in temporary seating  
I couldn't see very well  
But my heart was still fast-beating

For my imagination replaced lost vision  
And made the occasion somehow greater  
A memory I could always return to  
A treasure to be kept for later

For three quarters of an hour we heard  
The voices of children everywhere  
I let them all wash slowly over me  
Felt the magic in the air

The world and all it's troubles  
Suspended for a short while  
The frowns and worried looks  
Replaced with sunny smiles

Outside once again we braved  
The harsh wind that never stops  
And which had carried the pure voices away  
Over the South Shields rooftops

Paul Gerard Reed

# Safe And Sound

Whatever the day has brought,  
Whichever songs you have sung,  
Tonight, just remind yourself,  
Your children are happy and young;

Whatever your fears,  
However deep is your plight,  
Tonight, just remind yourself,  
Your children are all right;

Look inward, look outward,  
And then look all around,  
Tonight, just remind yourself,  
Your children are all safe and sound.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Safe And Sound Tonight

We are all here tonight  
Together  
Safe and sound  
Reading bedtime stories  
The world is locked outside  
And can't get in.

The rain beats upon the window  
The wind howls in the eaves  
But we are all here tonight  
Together  
Safe and sound.

Whatever happened today  
Or might happen tomorrow  
We are all here tonight  
Together  
Safe and sound.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Satnav For Beginners

'In 300 yards turn left' she said  
I wasn't used to being led  
But I wanted to keep on the right track  
I trusted SatNav to get me there and back

All went very well at first  
Followed her instructions, developed a thirst  
So stopped off at a cafe for a drink  
And gave myself a little time to think

Did this woman never get tired  
Was my own brain no longer required?  
Should I drive unquestioningly across the borders  
Like a foot soldier following orders

I must have relaxed and complacent I got  
And before you could say 'SatNav' I'd overshot  
The correct turn-off, now several miles past  
I drove on quite alarmed and somewhat aghast

'Take the next exit on the right' she screamed  
I thought it should be a left but maybe something I dreamed  
The pitch of her voice seemed to be creeping higher  
As I rapidly found myself in the mire

Then, in something resembling the RAC rally  
I ended up in some god-forsaken back alley  
The woman's voice started to break up and churn  
As I executed a rather impressive handbrake turn

I headed out of the city and away from the streets  
And sped towards the countryside's treats  
But the SatNav's fate was finally sealed  
As my car ploughed into a farmer's field

It's back to the old-fashioned way to keep sane  
Forget the SatNav and use my instinct again  
Rely on my own built-in compass, like a lamb to the slaughter  
And dump the SatNav in a bucket of water

Paul Gerard Reed

# Saturday Night Storm

Echoey black darkness with winds rushing through  
Litter picked up and dropped, then picked up anew  
Whooshing gales kiss then press hard against the glass  
As rattling gates and creaking stiles let the air pass

Rolling cans and tinkling bottles lend their sound  
To the symphony of bin lids slapping and flapping around  
Roof masts bend and doorknockers knock  
Invisible hands stretching out the wind sock

Behind our defences we huddle together and pray  
That the storm will surrender and soon melt away  
Leaving us safe with not a vestige or trace  
Of the wind-blown ghosts that swept the earth's face

Paul Gerard Reed

# Save A Moment

In the helter skelter of life  
As things move so fast along  
Remember to save a moment  
Stop and listen to the blackbirds song

Paul Gerard Reed

# Scarborough Fair

"Are you going to Scarborough Fair  
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme  
Remember me to one who lives there  
She once was a true love of mine"

Simon & Garfunkel

Somewhere within the dark confines,

Behind the flapping doors,

Set wriggling on it's tramway lines

The Ghost Train goes it's way once more;

The carousel whirls round and round

With painted ponies bucking and careering,

Set to the shrieks and screaming sounds

The grind of Victorian engineering;

In the corner the old penny arcade

Spring loaded buttons send ball bearings flying,

Timber cases proud though they fade

Memories of days never dying;

How precious the time, how fleeting spent

That Sunday with it's pleasures rare

How wonderful to be at that event

That afternoon at Scarborough Fair.

Paul Gerard Reed

# School Line

Another bright morning fair  
Broken free from the grasping sea,  
Carrying drifts of glacial air  
Beckoning to me;

We watch the lines waiting in the yard  
With their back-packs and low shoulders,  
We know that life will be hard  
Full of angry rocks and boulders;

But they know nought yet  
And in there lies the clue,  
Our challenge to them is set  
Knowing they will get through;

And, as the bell clangs and seagulls cry  
Tingling our remembering skin,  
The lines disappear inside  
Carrying our hopes within

Paul Gerard Reed

# School's Out

Ten minutes to go before school is out  
Twenty five past three, my life in mayhem,  
And they are in their classroom  
Not knowing that I am thinking of them;

At eleven years old  
Their primary schooling almost complete  
The best days of their lives  
They have the world at their feet;

At sixty years old  
My working life should be complete  
Bar another seven years or ten  
My misery replete;

Two minutes now, the bell to clang  
Another afternoon spent,  
Me, dredging efforts from an empty barrel  
Theirs, cascading in wild abandonment;

The door opens, parents and grandparents gather  
To safely collect, encircle with care  
Me, only another two hours to go  
Then home to see them there.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Scotland: My Love Renewed

I feel the joy and tears  
Swell up within my breast  
The scent of fresh morning  
And the years peel away;  
The mountain burns sprinkling  
The cool munch of grass,  
Dusty path and stone wall  
The thrill of it all;  
The battles and the glory  
Or the sadness of defeat  
Sheltered in glens  
Or icy winds on peaks;  
It all comes back to me  
Imploring my spirit, if it could  
To refresh it's tired eyes  
And surge time back in a flood

I stand as the evening gathers  
On hills over which the light spills  
A rainbow arcs in the distance  
And caresses the Pentland Hills

Heaven's showers have fallen on grass  
Which now lies bejewelled at my feet  
And the sunlit hills set before me  
Have made the day complete

No finer place can be imagined  
As around me the sheep gently graze  
The sun sinks slowly in the west  
Gone, another of Pentland's days

Beloved Scotland  
Where the mountain rivers gush and thrum with life  
And the air is as clean as a knife  
Where space is to be found away from the human race  
Where life is lived at an easier pace

Beloved Scotland

Where I took my children to see the light  
And although disinterested then  
Have since proved me right  
My love for Scotland showed them how  
And they take their own little ones now

This is a kind of heaven  
With cowslips in meadows lush  
Where the willows gracefully hang  
Over the swift rivers that gush;  
Teeming with sweet energy  
Where trout and salmon thrive  
I didnt know this was in store for me  
I am so happy to be alive!

Paul Gerard Reed

# Sea Glass

The faint, grey air bowled along the street  
The people trundled to and fro,  
The shop doorways and promised treats  
As on Sundays long ago;

And now we walk the same route  
The same breezes return to blow,  
The water still rushes, mute  
To the ears of the depths below;

On Blast Beach we find a brick  
With it's 'Londonderry' marking,  
A dog walker throws a stick  
An interlude to the barking;

An ice cream is bought to freeze the teeth  
A coffee to sooth the nerves,  
Beside 'Tommy', a red-rose wreath  
Set against the metal curves;

'Sea glass' and it's dull light  
Fills the careful eye  
With their green or milky white,  
Dry and wet, then dry;

And the collieries, once so proud,  
Deadened by the same hand  
That once fed the hungry crowd  
That dug below the land;

But who will say, forthright  
That Seaham will not rise again?  
That day will not emerge from night  
And take away it's pain.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Seasons

Our lives are strung together  
By seasons three months long  
All stretched out in a long, long row  
With binds between so strong;

Memories interwoven and treasured  
In the caverns of our minds  
Waiting patiently there for us to revisit  
And feel again those binds;

We cannot re-live the past  
But the feelings will always stay  
And people and places we loved  
From our hearts will never stray

Paul Gerard Reed

## Second Time Around

You, of course, knew all along  
That my timid sayings were just a blind,  
My protestations an empty song  
Hiding the strength of my mind;

Renewed life bloods intertwining  
What had been lost made rife,  
A sort of hidden silver lining  
Stitched in the frock coat of life;

But this time around worn with experience  
Bound with a ravelled thread,  
Learned from the hard school of expedience  
Like Lazarus risen from the dead;

My humble duty, myself to oust  
Where the plough had solemnly grooved,  
To fight back again, to rally, to roust  
To restore what had been removed;

This filling of the vacuum  
This silence turned to sound,  
This rushing of the log flume  
The second time around.

Paul Gerard Reed

## Secret Stream

The sun baked hard the grassy slopes,  
Placed burning light on shoulders,  
Ripening red the strawberry rows  
Under their green verandas  
As they slept on beds of straw;  
Gooseberry thorns hardened their stare  
Took revenge on prying fingers  
Probing for bitter fruit;  
All the while,  
Hidden behind the edges of the fields,  
A secret stream ran in shaded caresses  
Through leaf-laden passages  
Listless under the hanging branches  
And frittered the time away;  
No-one knew of it's tranquil journey  
It's continual slumbering between stalky banks  
That waved careless farewells  
To it's watery course;  
And as the sun grew in it's height  
The shade deepened in response  
And defied the glare  
Until the evening and the sun slunk away.

Paul Gerard Reed

# See The Light

I can see myself now  
From the outside looking in  
What a fool I've been;  
Congratulating myself  
Seeing my good points  
Through a filtered screen;  
Bad points eradicated  
Glossed-over  
Out of sight;  
Time to give back  
Not to give up  
Time to see the light

Paul Gerard Reed

# Seekers

The sun has risen and gone down again  
Lifting our joy to new heights  
The heat haze trembling our excitement  
Our share in the world's delights;

We are just a day older than yesterday  
Revelling in our youth  
Seekers of contentment and love  
As much as we seek the truth;

Tomorrow will not daunt us  
Our hope will stand the rain,  
Our happiness kept safe in our hearts  
Until the sun comes out again

Paul Gerard Reed

## Setting Off

Hands were waved and kisses blown  
As the bus slowly pulled away  
Chattering and excited, the happy throng  
At the start of a brand new day

As their innocence drifts to adulthood  
They might recall this youthful heaven  
They might remember the golden days  
When they were only six or seven

Paul Gerard Reed

# Shadows

We plant our feet and leave only shadows  
Our passage through life a mirage  
Our feelings hidden safely away  
Our expressions a camouflage;  
Those that follow see no trace  
Of us hopelessly lost in our maze  
Did it ever really happen  
That we met on those sunny days?  
The bricks and buildings still stand there  
As testament to our being  
But the names and faces have all changed  
To our deeds they are unseeing

Paul Gerard Reed

# Shell

You prised me from my retreating shell  
Into the sunlight, glorious and pure  
You clanged the morning bell  
To start life afresh, provide the cure;

My sunken eyes were opened anew  
To gaze with innocence and wonder  
My feet sprang and bounded through  
The places I used to blunder;

How more precious as we grow old  
To rekindle youth's lacklustre grip  
But now to cherish it in a fierce hold  
Never again to let it slip.

Paul Gerard Reed

## Shorter Days

Days are growing shorter now  
The hay fields lie depleted,  
Berries hang richly on the bough  
Heady Summer has retreated;

Now waters have a crisp edge  
Where lazily flowed the burn,  
Silent now the chirruping hedge  
Sour the milk in the churn;

Supple bones betray their aches  
Under warm blankets thrown,  
The low sun bores and rakes  
Across grass no longer mown;

Twilight creeps and wraps around  
Surly tides crash and swoon,  
The brief light to black is bound  
Clouds glide across the moon;

Essence of Winter has it's birth  
Restless leaves blow on the gusts  
Into the night-gown around the earth  
Through which the starlight thrusts.

The long grasses shiver and scrawl  
Morning stifles a tired yawn,  
Gone the blackbird's clarion call  
Through Autumn's filter drawn;

The fencelines once upright, now slant  
Against their creaking posts to brace,  
Shifting their feet to find implant  
As winds though their boardings race;

So, shorter days, find your close  
Let the night-stars wink goodbye,  
As I dream through moonbeam glows  
Of the Springtime drawing nigh.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Shortest Day

Warming sun, now a furtive stranger  
Too shy to reveal your face,  
Who takes sly peaks above the horizon  
And is slowly fallen from grace;

Sidling between inky rooftops  
Carrying watery light across hills,  
Casting chiselled shadows down walls  
But no soothing warmth instills;

How far from the summer days  
Our weary bodies lie, wracked and finished  
Our eyes bathed in gloomy darkness  
Our threadbare hopes diminished;

But soon we will sing a different tune  
And our weakness become the stronger,  
For we know the shorter days are over  
And tomorrow will be longer.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Shy Eyes

This morning something has dawned in my mind  
A patch of blue sky lifts shy eyes, fleetingly  
Defying the poking sun,  
Defeating the gathered gloom  
Dissolving past regrets and plans,  
Even piercing this room;  
This room, of doubts and fears  
Of weariness and tears,  
Of yesterdays, unfulfilled  
Of times wasted and empty thoughts  
Of things I could have had  
But never bought;  
But now, I am glad to have nothing  
For those shy eyes are looking at me again  
This time, a longer glance,  
Long enough for the meaning to be conveyed  
Long enough to fill me up  
And my heart entrance.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Silk Is Finished

'Silk' is finished  
Absorbing drama!  
Better by half  
Than Panorama

Paul Gerard Reed

# Sirens

The silence clings to the walls  
Broken only by the trumpet of an exhaust  
From the car park below;  
Windows still ajar  
The quest still far  
From its conclusion;

A siren comes now, in the dim distance  
Unable to carry it's urgency  
Through the miles between  
There and this complacent scene;  
Dissolving in an eerie whistle  
Rather like calling a dog home  
And nobody hears

Then more sirens in a tinny symphony  
They call persistently  
But still no-one hears.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Sitting In The Park

The sun shone on our Saturday lunchtime  
On vinyl through the scratches and clicks  
'Sitting in the park, waiting for you'  
The radio's faint echoes from '66

And we landed in a different world  
A sad 'goodbye' became a cheery 'hello'  
Where suddenly everything was alright again  
Everything was mellow

The words drifted through our sunny band  
'Wondering if you're even gonna show'  
To ears that had never heard before  
The reflective words from so long ago

We all drifted into a better time  
'With my back against the fence'  
We relaxed and things slowed down  
And felt a little less tense

And the unanswered question  
'Waiting for you my dear'  
We'll never know if she turned up  
So wistful and sincere

A little moment that would be forgotten  
Forever lost in life's brisk game  
Now it's written down we will recall  
That sunny Saturday with Georgie Fame

Paul Gerard Reed

# Sitting On A Wall

Sitting on a wall  
This minute will pass  
Beneath the leaves that fall  
Slowly grows the grass;

This hour, this time  
Will surely melt away  
The stars will climb  
And we will lose today;

But for a while we are here  
Just sitting on a wall  
The way ahead is clear  
Our hopes stand proud and tall;

And this moment, this space  
Belongs to you and me,  
Tomorrow not even a trace  
On the wild wind blowing free.

Paul Gerard Reed

## Six Blue Tits

In the fullness of the morning,  
In the glorious morning,  
In a quiet nook  
In a quiet corner of the garden  
Six blue tits came calling  
Came fluttering and dancing,  
Came hopping and prancing,  
Came twirling and tightrope-walking,  
Came stepping and twig-stalking,  
Came whistling and singing  
Came fluting and shrilling  
Came fluffing and thrilling;

In the blueness of the sky  
In the glorious blue sky  
Six blue tits came calling

Paul Gerard Reed

# Sky

The air fell softly along rock edges  
In a whispering autumnal refrain  
We lay back and looked at the great grey sky  
A sky that would never be the same again;

Sculptured fringes among nothingness  
Subdued by the movement of air  
Hidden lights behind wispy veils  
A deep and downward smothered stare;

No artist even with delicate brush  
Could capture the invisibility of heaven's cloak  
Sketch a better place lying in wait for us  
Beyond this earthly smoke

Paul Gerard Reed

# Sleep

With glorious lack of inhibition  
We give in to sleep  
The pillow draining the mind of worry  
Away from life's hassle and flurry  
For a while;  
The rest a sublime release  
The night passes in a warm swirl of peace  
Enveloping body and soul  
And we awake renewed  
With calmness and hope imbued  
And ready for the new day

Paul Gerard Reed

# Sleep Yourself Awake

They say sleep less, live less  
So sleep more to get out of the mess  
The mess that is modern life  
Full of anxiety and strife;

Yes, the cure is clear  
Go to bed when the sunset is near  
Don't wait up till god knows when  
Or to be worried by 'News At Ten';

Switch off tablet, mobile and app  
And all that other load of crap  
Take control of your own mind  
And pull down the blind;

Rest your head on a pillow soft  
Dreaming of hopes held high aloft  
Into the land of slumber take a peep  
Close your eyes and go to sleep.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Smile

A smile is an instant affirmation  
That life won't be allowed to beat you,  
An expression of inner happiness  
The perfect way to greet you;

A smile warms the cockles of the heart  
Releases pent-up tension and care,  
Smiling eyes swim in blueness  
And friendliness declare;

A smile is an antidote to sadness  
A free remedy for all ill,  
Try one now for yourself  
Just to see if it will.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Smiles

Four children sitting on a bench  
Cares between them so few  
Life's glory yet to clench  
Tears and joys still to accrue;

Which one to be the gracious host?  
Which one to be a priest?  
Which one to have the most?  
Which one to have the least?

And now, what of now?  
This cherished moment of youth  
To learn to keep the vow  
To learn to prize the truth;

To be loyal, to be giving  
To keep going, mile after mile  
To win this battle of living  
But most of all, to smile.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Sneeze

Some have a long build-up to it  
With others it arrives unannounced;  
Some try to mask things with their hands  
Others don't mind it being pronounced;

Some emit it like a gunshot  
Like a crack of a high-powered rifle;  
Others squeeze the end of their nose  
In order the noise to stifle;

With some it is a distinct two-stager  
With the 'Aah' split from the 'Tishoo';  
Others do it without a pause  
In one note like a cow's 'moo';

Some desperately search for a Kleenex  
Or a hanky to cover the roar;  
Then take them home to have them washed  
And replace them with new out the drawer

I wonder if your way of sneezing  
(Whichever you think most merited)  
Has been developed as you grew up  
Or was your style inherited? ;

Whichever way you sneeze  
Whether you're a 'stifler' or a 'blaster'  
Just remember to aim away from me  
And prevent a sneezing disaster

Paul Gerard Reed

# So Sad The Softening Light

So sad the softening light  
Marking the end of the day,  
The chill in the evening air  
That takes your breath away;

So swift the passage of time  
That draws the day to a close,  
The haunting of glowering shadows  
Embracing our cares and woes;

So sorrowful the oncoming winter  
That grips with it's frosty hand  
The dark evenings with gloomy faces  
Looking down over the land.

Paul Gerard Reed

# So The Day Goes On

And so the day goes on...  
Hearts, unbound and beating separately  
Taking love at face value and literally  
The night will come and set them free  
Something to rest their memories on;

For a while we walked together  
Hurriedly flew the clouds of grey  
Not one worry did we have that day  
All our cares joined and slipped away  
As if bound by invisible tether;

No longer grows the husk-ripened corn  
In breezing fields where we once ran  
Before the woes and tears began  
The sun-charmed boy grew into a man  
Even on the day he was born.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Someone

Sunday finds us together  
On an unaccustomed occasion  
Where the dwindling of spirits suddenly surges  
And dances through the air  
Where life is on the pavements and everywhere  
Just speaking tells us of love  
And the wanting to be there;

Are we joined in mortal heights  
Beyond mountain tops  
Which others have never seen?  
For each day is better than the last  
Although there are no rewards,  
Not for this joy,  
That takes on a smile broader than the landscape  
As the sun fills the sky with blue light  
And morning will never come;

What of it if we are chosen  
The lucky ones who found the way  
To disentangle all the griefs  
Thieve the essence of life  
From it's gloomy forebodings  
And fling it in the face of sadness  
What of it if it is us?  
It had to be someone.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Souter Bay

Shimmering sunlight  
Bejewelled the crystal water  
Which peacefully raked the rounded pebbles  
Washed inwards and then outwards with the tide

We sat on a rocky ledge  
And dangled legs  
And thought about the future  
Behind us a gouged-out cavern  
It's layers of time exposed  
By the waves of yesteryear

And all was calm and serene  
No troubles entered that space  
We knew we could only inhabit  
For a few moments  
Until returning to the world  
And all of it's cares

Paul Gerard Reed

# Space

'And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,  
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;  
There midnight 's all a-glimmer, and noon a purple glow,  
And evening full of the linnet's wings.'

From 'The Lake Isle Of Innisfree' by William Butler Yeats

I laid down my things  
And stood empty-handed in front of the world  
Heart afraid to beat,  
Rendered my soul to the orbits and skies and comets  
So that my feet made no impression on the earth  
And I drifted away into space.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Sparkler

Our bonfire night  
Was a single sparkler  
Timidly showering sorrowful sparks  
Each with miniscule light;

But one sparkler, or a million  
Held courageously  
Can defy the dank cold  
Can pierce the darkest night

Paul Gerard Reed

# Sparrow Song

Not possessing the range of the blackbird,  
Nor the tumbling cascade of the wren  
Or the skylark symphony set on high;  
But your voice told me  
That you greeted the morning with joy  
With incessant devotion  
Two notes that said I love the world

Paul Gerard Reed

# Sparrowhawk

Some placid scene below you spied  
Through steely eye that never cried  
And all at once the peace that lay  
Shattered by swooping affray;

A blackbird, innocent for so long  
Naught in his mind but optimistic song  
In a safe garden that afternoon  
Not knowing the end was to be so soon;

Now the mornings will no longer ring  
With the hopeful notes you used to sing  
Now gathered up, in death-vice gripped  
To be crushed and torn and spat and ripped;

Now, on a peak somewhere unseen  
Sits love and survival, and all that's between  
The breeze dares to ruffle a timid grass stalk  
Beside the lonely sparrowhawk.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Spectacle Wipes

Spectacle wipes clear the fog  
Allowing you to look through the smog  
They're useful bits of moistened tissue  
With them you couldn't have an issue;

For if, like me, your sight is mediocre  
Despite being a careful and cautious non-smoker  
Binoculars might seem to be the only cure  
For clouded vision that is so poor;

But when you're next peering through smears  
All may not be as grim as it first appears  
And your bleary problem I can fix  
With a little sachet (sold in boxes of 26):

So do not despair, the answer is here  
To make things once again seem crystal clear  
Yes, restore your vision to cherry ripe  
With a quick rub from a spectacle wipe.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Sports Day

Sports Day  
And not a race run  
Rain falling  
No 'currant bun';

Sports Day  
Quagmires and puddles  
What a wash out  
No hugs and cuddles;

Sports Day  
No sign of the sun  
Rain falling  
Not a race begun;

Sports Day  
It's been a miss  
Nothing to remember  
No winner's kiss;

Sports Day  
But we've had no fun  
Rain falling  
No starter's gun;

Sports Day  
But we are indoors  
Wet socks and feet  
For some wet paws;

Sports Day  
But nothing done  
Rain falling  
No sign of the sun;

Sports Day  
Gloomy and wet  
No medals or trophies  
No wiining bet;

Sports Day  
No races won  
Rain falling  
Blotting out the sun;

Sports Day  
Brought cold and cough  
Rain keeps falling  
Let's call it off.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Squandered

Like birds, like flowers, oh! let us live To-day,  
And leave To-morrow to the Fates' old fingers,  
And waste no weeping over Yesterday!  
Lo! round about the golden lustre lingers,

From 'May-Day' by Sir Edmund William Gosse

We didn't live for today  
Over tomorrow's worries our minds wandered  
We wept for years over yesterday  
So all Gosse's advice was squandered

Paul Gerard Reed

# St Mary's Island

Plimsolled feet stand on creviced stone  
Encrusted with clinging shells and kelp and bone,  
But never relaxed can their steps abide  
With one eye on the incoming tide;

For this land belongs to the sea  
Each day overwashed, submerged then set free,  
Where grey seals rest, then entwine to play  
On the slippery fringes of the rocky bay;

Oystercatchers stab and pick and probe  
Prancing inside the sea's foamy robe,  
Overhead circle the restless, crying gulls  
Silhouetted as the setting sun dulls;

The lighthouse stands serene, white and old  
It's worn-down steps tell of tales untold,  
Once again the causeway ceases to be  
As it's craggy top slips under the sea.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Staircase

This staircase in front of me  
Has felt the thud of leaden feet  
Trudging slowly upwards  
When the feeling was not so sweet;

Through the sleepy half-haze of wakefulness  
How many mornings has it borne  
The stepping laboriously to a new day  
The stifling of the tired yawn;

Upwards, ever upwards they rose  
Clambering, climbing on their merry way,  
Only to fall, tumble, descend  
As their life's plans went astray.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Stan

There you stand in ragged attire  
A symbol to our silent mirth  
Resolutely defying time's fire  
In this place of your lowly birth;

For what little do fame and fortune cater?  
Offering nothing but sordid gain  
When today, all those years later  
We stand and stare at you in the rain;

Stan, our sweet smile of childhood  
Taking us far beyond mortal sorrow  
Laughter, our bounteous force for good  
And you, still there tomorrow.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Statins

Let's all start taking some statins  
They say they're good for Asians or Latins  
Their benefit is clearly not a hoax  
They do prevent you having strokes

Statins also have the knack  
Of preventing the dreaded heart attack  
At fifty, sixty or older still  
They're an incredibly useful pill

Imagine a rotten football side  
With their goals tally on the slide  
If you slipped a statin in their half time tea  
They'd be sure to go on a goal-scoring spree

Why not try them on the animal race  
They live life at too fast a pace  
Their problems we can easily stem  
Nine out of ten cats said they liked them

Why not bung them to your aged parrot  
Or your pet rabbit with his carrot  
Or stick them in the goldfish bowl  
And feed daily to your mare in foal

Statins might also be of use  
To rhinoceros and hairy moose  
And the lion we should not deprive  
Statins could keep him alive

Don't stop there, remember the dog  
Ferrets, field mice and the shy hedgehog  
They all need a daily statin dose  
To put an end to their cares and woes

So hats off to this new wonder pill  
Take them till you get your fill  
A cure whether you're poor or wealthy  
Feeling great or so unhealthy

Wash them down with a glass of water  
Give them to your son and daughter  
Hand them round to colleague and friend  
And watch as their lives extend

They'll survive for a few more decades  
With their dentures and their deaf-aids  
They'll sing as they let their ancient cat in  
'He owes it all to the humble statin'

Paul Gerard Reed

# Stay Forever Young

Stay forever young  
Not a decrepit trooper  
Or steadfast party pooper  
Like me;  
Stay innocent and unbowed  
Undiminished and proud,  
That's the way that you should be;  
Stay with wide eyes,  
Laughter and cries,  
But never filled with pain;  
With a sense of wonder  
Not a temper like thunder  
Where bleary skies chase the rain;  
Stay spring-heeled and dancing  
Skipping and joyously prancing  
Where no shadows ever roosted;  
Your sun never to set  
Or memory to forget,  
By youth forever boosted;  
Transfix time on the dial  
Turn to inches the mile,  
Your song always to be sung;  
An oak that will never splinter  
Spring never turn to Winter  
Stay forever young

Paul Gerard Reed

# Stay In The Game

I don't want anything much from life  
Just to stay in the game  
Along with my beloved wife  
That's my primary aim;

I don't want riches or money  
I don't want power or fame  
I don't want to live in a land of milk and honey  
I just want to stay in the game.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Stay Together

&quot;Now you will feel no rain,  
For each of you will be shelter to the other.  
Now you will feel no cold,  
For each of you will be warmth to the other.  
Now there is no more loneliness,  
For each of you will be companion to the other.  
Now you are two bodies,  
But there is only one life before you.  
Go now to your dwelling place  
To enter into the days of your togetherness  
And may your days be good and long upon the earth.&quot;

'Wedding Prayer (Apache) ' Anon.

Stay together  
Through the thick and the thin  
Who knows when it will end  
Or when your life might begin?

Pool your resources  
Double your charms  
Who knows how long you will be  
In each other's arms?

Remain locked together  
Two are stronger than one  
Who knows what you might achieve  
Or see glory for how long.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Still

LOVE, meet me in the green glen,  
Beside the tall elm-tree,  
Where the sweetbriar smells so sweet agen;  
There come with me.

Meet me in the green glen. - John Clare

On Valentine's Day we renew  
Our love, forged by the things we've been through,  
Still intact, still growing,  
A candle flame fanned but still glowing,  
Still a bond, still a common spirit  
To take on life and all that's in it;  
Unmarked, though time has flown,  
By all that the world has thrown,  
With hope maintained, ever on the rise,  
A solid union that defies;  
Undiverted, still on it's track,  
Reaching for tomorrow, not turning back,  
Relentlessly sailing through battering seas  
Ever caring, wanting to please,  
And now, on Valentine's Day, still in place,  
Still beautiful and full of grace.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Still Waiting For The Call

The air raid sirens wailed  
And the bombs began to drop,  
Destroyers and battleships sailed  
While life ground to a stop;

But for us, not the smoke  
The shattered glass and dreams,  
We are not wrapped in fear's cloak  
The crying and the screams;

Where courage rose in veins  
When the bugle call was sounded,  
The thin air carried it's strains  
Across the dead bodies mounded;

But we say hello every day  
For love we do not lack,  
Not for us to enter the fray  
Or loved ones that didn't come back;

Our mettle is untested  
No despair in which to fall,  
Our spirits asleep and rested  
Still waiting for the call.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Stop

Draw breath and fill the lungs  
Stop the ceaseless wind and tide,  
Let go the hands from the ladder's rungs  
Lay the hour glass on it's side;

Receive the light into the eyes  
Slow the race the heart is beating,  
Let wisdom grow into the wise  
Stand still, for time be fleeting.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Straight Ahead

The day grinds into gear  
As we rise from our slumber  
And take on our duties  
And all that they encumber

We march on, as soldiers  
Looking to neither right nor left  
Submerging our feelings  
Of all emotions bereft

Straight ahead, straight ahead  
Relentlessly on a forward move  
New obstacles to overcome  
New truths to prove

Please give us strength on our journey  
Let us give of our best  
And let us lie together safely  
When we need to take our rest

Paul Gerard Reed

# Stripes Of Light

I am sitting here at my desk  
And the sun has decided to shine  
Slanting through the blinds  
Stripes of light that are mine;

I see my shadow moving  
Outlined as black and flat  
My head dark against the brightness  
Set amongst light-wanded slat;

The sun has chosen to warm the earth  
It's brilliance gloriously decanted  
It might disappear in a moment  
I will never take it for granted

Paul Gerard Reed

# Stripy Socks

Presents have been exchanged  
And now the New Year calls  
Tree taken down, room re-arranged  
Cards unstuck from walls;

The sentiments and wishes within  
Now no longer in view  
Some of them in the bin  
Apart from a chosen few;

Lights unplugged and coiled  
Tablecloth stored away  
Lest it should be spoiled  
Kept for another day;

How should this Christmas be judged?  
Amongst all the others gone by  
Is the end of the year begrudged?  
As time once again starts to fly;

I think I will spend the year in a box  
With the Christmas lights and tree  
And wear those stripy socks  
That someone bought for me

Paul Gerard Reed

# Summer Has Gone

We trod with muddy shoes  
Amongst autumn's new-won hues  
As the slate grey sea boiled and churned  
Clover and thistle at our feet  
Had replaced buttercup sweet  
'Alas! the frail Summer has turned'

What hopes we had for tomorrow  
Now washed through with sorrow  
Swept away by the frothing waves  
When did the cup leave the lip  
The pink rose turn to hip  
And leave us as fortune's slaves?

In the middle of the day  
The pebbly cove our hideaway  
As in crashed the impatient tide  
But when did the road bend  
The Summers day come to an end  
The golden rays diminish and slide?

What bespeckled and gnarly hand  
Redrew soft meadow land  
Instead had the stubbly hay-field hewn?  
Which devious and conniving mind  
Drew down the autumn's blind  
And left our dreams scattered and strewn?

We dragged feet as we trooped  
Our thoughts burdened, shoulders stooped  
No longer the hedgerows thrummed  
The twigs bare and stark  
No more the sky cradled the lark  
The pastures left silent and numbed

Huddled together in our cove  
Our thoughts started to rove  
To the time when birdsong will ring  
When the chill has lifted and flown

Gentle breezes chase wind's moan  
And the dewy grass heralds the Spring

Paul Gerard Reed

# Sun

The sun rises on another day  
Knowing it will soon set  
Disappear again,  
Promising us riches yet;

Every day is so fleeting  
A brief chance, a time to change  
To still be alive, to learn,  
To develop, to rearrange;

To heal, to mend, to love,  
Under the sun's display  
To use the sun's energy  
To make the most of that day;

But fear sometimes stops us  
The fear of something new,  
The challenge inside all of us  
The challenge for me and you;

The sun need not come back  
It's fiery ball to burn,  
And, as the sun grows old  
One day it will not return.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Sun And Rain

How I love the sun to shine  
And cast it's warmth over all  
But when I am dry and parched  
How I love the rain to fall

Paul Gerard Reed

# Sunday

On a dreamy Sunday  
The lazy grass refuses to grow,  
The river barely supports the hull  
The boaters are too tired to row;

Stones in walls face the sun  
Hiding their shadowy side,  
Coffee cups picked up from saucers  
Are drained, put down and set aside;

Meandering inane chatter fills halls  
'Neath Cathedral bells peal and clang,  
Floating serenely down on the breeze  
From the tower whence they rang;

Pushchairs clatter over cobblestones  
Sandaled feet traipse and become burned,  
Plans for tomorrow are shelved awhile  
Pages in books thumbed and turned;

Peaceful thoughts fill heads  
Wars bow down to the pacifist  
And for one beguiling moment  
Monday doesn't exist.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Sunday Sunday

The old track is still there  
And will be when we have gone  
The birds are still singing  
Their optimistic song  
The dew is off the slate  
Catch the breeze, too late;

The sunlight finds its way  
And settles on our head  
A cheery 'good morning'  
To each 'good morning' said  
And all about is calm  
Nothing can come to harm;

This is Sunday, best of days  
Long forgotten the week,  
Gone the clamour and hurry  
A little peace to seek  
Let contentment fill the mind  
And leave last week behind.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Sunderland Illuminations

Roker seafront, October  
Sea set in a frown,  
Sun long set and over  
Full moon looking down;

People shuffling in the park  
Stand-stillers and through-crowd surgers,  
Big wheel, white in the dark  
Hot drinks, sausages and burgers;

And standing in the midst of the night  
The lake, free of it's scullers,  
A receptacle of myriad light  
Reflecting all the colours;

Then a lightshow of sparkling winter  
Of bold white and faint starry traces,  
Playing games on the gnarly sinter  
Of the old grotto's rock faces;

All the people milling around  
Young and old amongst the wheels and the cogs,  
Talking and shouting, jumping up and down  
As long queues formed for the bogs;

Finally the slow drift for home  
To places of warmth and shelter,  
Toward the final exit they roam  
Past the glorious helter skelter;

We will remember the lit-up stones  
This rocky old park, the cairns,  
And though the cold may have chilled our bones  
We know we did it for the bairns.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Sunset At Whitburn Lodge

The evening sun flashed fire across the sky  
Tongues of flame interlaced the clouds  
Dappled grey pools of mournful light  
Hid sullen rays amongst the crowds

That last orange embrace of the noon  
Turned ripe as pod spilt seed  
Hung ponderously over the darkening grass  
Lit with white-trumpeted bindweed

Vapours trailed all forlorn and lost  
Within the magenta and slate bedazzled  
The sun's heat all cooled and dispersed  
The earth's crust no longer frazzled

Suddenly the dark swallowed us up  
The canvas all frays and tears  
Soundless feet tiptoed through shadows  
Dewy creatures emerged from lairs

No more the strolling easy vista  
To dwell and gaze wondrously upon  
Time to retreat behind firm doors  
Night is here; the evening gone

Paul Gerard Reed

# Sunshine

I ambled back next to green leaves  
Which the breeze could barely reach  
Calmness flooded through my mind  
I had spent a day on the beach

I had stood at the waters edge  
Blue horizon stretched out in front  
The steep cliffs for once at rest  
With no tidal edge to blunt

Toddlers standing ankle-deep  
Fathers with trousers rolled to the knee  
Three girls tumbling and crashing about  
Splashing the benign face of the sea

Joyous shouts and shrieks  
Sand castles built and washed away  
Lazy waves had reached the shore  
The gift of this sunny day

For all of the winter's ravages  
That had bared tree and left souls dark  
We now had nature's sweet recompense  
Happy children's cries and dog bark

For this was a celebratory day  
To sweep away the short days with nights black  
We have the beginning of summer  
We have the sunshine back

Paul Gerard Reed

# Swaying

The kind air of September encircled us  
Wafting tree tops and lifting crinkled leaves  
Which, released from their summery holds,

Performed silent ballet steps  
To the rhythm of their rustling partners  
To the feelings that Autumn unfolds;

Gently alighting on the soft grass  
Bringing a sudden peace,  
The flaccid nothingness we crave,

When the world becomes too busy  
And we absorb too many cares  
And our smooth skins they engrave;

And so we ran from exuberance  
Unbound and springing  
Our joys together upheld;

Dancing golden parabolas  
Through swaying long grasses  
That the calm breezes swelled.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Take Off Your Vest

How good it is to take your vest off  
When the Summer does begin  
It makes you a lot cooler  
And its one thing less to tuck in

Paul Gerard Reed

# Tangled Strings

I practiced non-flying things,  
And tangled my strings,  
Took the wind and turned it upside down;

I broke all my struts,  
Ran along frozen ruts  
Flatly refused to leave the ground;

My plastic sheets flapped,  
To their crooked frame strapped,  
Billowed briefly the string held taut;

But then held sullenly to the hill  
Let sweep over the gale's chill  
And defied the air's onslaught;

The magnetic allure,  
With gravity the cure,  
Over-ruling any pathetic uplift

Of the windy day,  
Trying to take me away  
My leaden and clinging feet shift;

The blue January skies  
To which you had lifted your eyes  
In such heady anticipation;

Held in lofty dreams a dearth,  
And the centre of the earth,  
Became a far more likely destination;

So cowering wind and gale  
That through the long grasses flail  
Tottering the chimneys and masts;

Take your misgiven powers  
That trembles the flowers  
That wake us with your harsh blasts;

And blow yourself out  
No longer the fence clout  
Let me fly on a soft breeze that yields

To my colourful display  
Which would flutter and sway  
Over the mazy patchwork of fields

Paul Gerard Reed

# Technology

Technology exists just to defeat us  
No matter how hard we try to grapple  
It will always emerge the victor  
Like gravity taking on the apple  
We desperately left-click and right-click  
We press control-alt-delete  
But no matter how many buttons we press  
We will always taste defeat  
Whenever we learn a new technique  
To get over a new problem we've found  
Technology invents a newer problem  
To bring us back down to ground  
'Switch it off, then back on again'  
Is their oft-heard advice  
To solve all of your technical ills  
On almost every device  
But eventually even that doesn't work  
The screen 'freezes' and 'locks'  
Your equipment is gripped in a malaise  
And needs a complete detox  
Or maybe a major defragmentation  
That sounds like it might do the trick  
But after you've waited about 24 hours  
You find your PC is still sick  
'The emails are down'  
Is another sorry statement we hear  
All messages are stuck in the ether  
Let's go to the pub for a beer  
How did the technology geeks  
Manage to become billionaires  
And leave us with this bundle of problems  
By downloading all their cares  
Onto the likes of poor you and me  
Who struggle to sort things out  
But let's face it, everybody  
We're on the wrong end of a road  
We bandy about acronyms  
Like PDFs and HTMLs  
As if we knew what they were

But it still doesn't ring any bells  
Because we are mere pawns in the game  
Clicking and typing away  
We have all been bamboozled  
By the 'technos' of the day  
We are now slaves to a technology  
That doesn't even work properly  
And by the time they sort out the problems  
We will all be grey and elderly  
So my advice to you at your keyboard  
Or waving your phone in the air  
Is get yourself off to the pub  
Give me five minutes and I'll join you there

Paul Gerard Reed

# Tell Me On A Sunday

"Find a circus ring with a flying trapeze  
Tell me on a Sunday please"

from 'Tell Me On A Sunday'- Andrew Lloyd Webber

Now that the week is over  
Now that the week is done  
Now no longer the rover  
Now the empty gun

Who fired his shots in his younger days  
With none left now to fire  
Who lived life in a blurring haze  
Who never seemd to tire

So let the afternoon sun sink  
Let the day draw to a close  
Take me home for one more drink  
And to smell the faded rose.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Ten Years

I know it's just the blink of an eye  
Ten years will come and just pass me by  
Just as the last decade I now gaze upon  
Ten years will come and soon be gone

I think back to the start of that era  
Millennium dawning, happiness seemed so nearer  
Settled, at peace and not care-worn  
Beloved Hawthorne and Ravensbourne

Now they are both lost in clouds and rain  
I can never walk though their doors again  
Lost, to me the warm summer breeze  
Rustling through Dad's apple trees

Lost to me, amongst a thousand other things  
Swamped by new places and wedding rings  
Faces and places that have changed so fast  
Ten years only, but so far in the past

Paul Gerard Reed

# Test

So you thought the rain would flood me out  
Or, if not, the heat would bring me drought  
You brought the impenetrable blackness of all that ails  
And icy rivers, quivered by gales

Fog that descended and wrapped me around  
Even put securely-held joys out of bounds  
But now for your information, to keep you abreast  
I am still here and have passed your test!

Paul Gerard Reed

# That Once Was Me

I am surrounded by young people  
All dashing about  
Or lazing about  
As the case may be  
That once was me;

I too once stayed out all day  
Drank lemonade  
Saw the sun fade  
Sat under a tree  
That once was me;

I too once wore raggy jeans  
Had long hair  
Pretended I didn't care  
Went on a spree  
That once was me;

I too once was part of the crowd  
Joined in the throng  
Sang the same song  
About being free  
That once was me;

I too once thought I knew  
What life was about  
Had it all worked out  
Thought the future could see  
That once was me;

I too once ran down the wing  
I could leave you behind  
Centre forward to find  
I skipped past you with glee  
That once was me;

I too once could walk with a stride  
Had nerves made of steel  
Watched films reel-to-reel

Had eyes that could see  
That once was me;

I too once had a plan  
Would see it through  
But as the time flew  
It proved not to be  
That once was me.

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Answer

What is it, this death  
That we are so afraid of?  
That we should never see our loved ones again  
That we should be so utterly alone  
That there is only a nothingness  
Orbiting our own minds in a whirlpool  
Of complete emptiness;  
Flying to a destination that doesn't exist;  
Passing by when there is none to pass by  
Nothing to see or feel  
No-one to hold;  
When even our inner soul floats, abandoned  
In the sea of time  
When hearts that were joined are now severed  
Memories and comforts torn away  
And all is lost.  
But how can all be lost when I have you  
To carry on and bear the torch  
To pass it on, again and again and again  
Until the flame, so kindled through generations  
Refuses to die  
And will not recognise fear  
That is the answer

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Ascot Gold Cup

Estimate returned to her field of glory  
Once again on greatness to lean  
We watched as you calmly walked beforehand  
On our little computer screen;

They placed a hood over your head  
But for that there was no need  
Your willingness was not in doubt  
To be coaxed, to follow, or to lead

Missunited set a good gallop  
She pressed hard along the way  
Knowing that if you were to pass her  
The entire trip you had to stay

Brown Panther lurked in waiting  
Leading Light on the wide outside  
You strode regally in behind  
Seemingly no effort to your stride

Then, the race was on!  
The Panther skulked away  
Leaving just a line of three  
To fight out the finish that day

For although having given up her lead  
Missunited was down only a couple of necks  
She was fighting bravely on with you  
To see who could deny the fairer sex

Moore switched inside and spied a gap  
And you gamely rushed on through  
The Queen's pale complexion  
Took on a pinker hue

The roar from the crowd swelled out  
From grandstand over parade ring  
As the final fight was fought  
With stamina to be the king

Leading Light swayed under the strain  
And hung into the middle of the course  
Surely now he could not resist  
Estimate's finishing force

But no! he straightened and rallied  
And surged again with widened eyes  
Your flashing hooves not quite quick enough  
To retain your Gold Cup prize

When all was done, the Queen still wore a smile  
As she had from the beginning  
She calmly accepted your gallant defeat  
As gracefully as your winning

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Autumn

So Summer has left without farewell  
The daylight no more to dwell  
In lazy afternoon hammock and swing  
No more cut flowers indoors to bring

So now we have the Autumn's dawn  
With thermal curtains firmly drawn  
With hay stubble and withered sheaves  
Burst bubbles and drifting leaves

What prospect awaits us, the lonely view  
Of grimy mornings and frozen dew  
The fight for survival in leafless wood  
Forgotten glory of blossoming bud

Forgotten the blaze of midday sun  
Sand castles and beach-day fun  
Instead we are left beside the fire glow  
With rain-spatters and chilly blow

Autumn, take this as my true word  
Spoken out loud and not inferred  
Take with you your red and gold  
Your drab evenings and shivering cold

Give Winter too my heartfelt greeting  
But tell Him also to be fleeting  
Bring me Spring and a Year that's new  
With hedgerows green and bells of blue

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Beginning

We breasted the rise and plotted our course  
Along stony paths amongst yellow gorse  
The sea so vast and glinting its eye  
Shimmering backcloth to the herring gull's cry

Sparrowhawk hovering in chesnut and grey  
Falling like a stone on unsuspecting prey  
Skylark overhead on an invisible perch  
Lest his landing the ground besmirch

Life rising slowly from amongst grassy tuft  
Daisy and buttercup stems intertwined and cuffed  
A raising too of spirits within human breast  
Where no longer shallow thoughts and drear infest

An unfurling that Nature alone explains  
Bringing vibrancy and blood-surge through the veins  
This is when Spring replaces Winter's sins  
This is the moment when hope begins

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Butterfly

In the tranquil arms of a Sunday morning  
Over the grassy hills there  
The first warbling song of the skylark  
Hung sweetly in the air;  
The first Peacock butterfly  
Gazed sightlessly from eyes of blue  
No longer shielded under dreary wings of black  
That have been closed all winter through;  
Resting for a brief passing moment  
To take in the world serene  
On green stems now tangling and thrusting  
Through the dead straw in between;  
Knowing that your time has arrived at last  
Your patience to reap it's reward  
As the gentle Sunday breezes rustle  
Your hiding place in the sward

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Case Of The Lost Dvd Remote Control

It was there one minute  
But the next it had gone  
And nobody knew who'd lost it  
They all put that certain face on

The one that says 'nothing to do with me'  
Accompanied by a shrug of the shoulder  
Then several months went by  
And the nights grew darker and colder

Each time we wanted to use the DVD player  
We had to use the manual buttons and wait;  
We couldn't view episode 9 of 9  
Until we'd watched the other eight;

We dreamed of those long-lost golden days  
When, as long as you were within range,  
We'd just pick up the remote and point it  
To make menu and programme change

Then, one day out of sheer frustration  
I embarked on a frenzied search  
I moved all the furniture around  
And, as part of my research

Lay flat on the ground and peered under  
The bottom of our sofa (a three-seater)  
And, reaching into the hidden recesses of faux leather  
Experienced a feeling that could not have been sweeter

Tucked away in an almost inaccessible spot  
Was that little black magical box  
Along with a marble, a ten pence piece  
And a pair of discarded socks

I gleefully snatched the thing up  
And shoved on the first DVD I could find  
And, purely for gratuitous purposes  
Watched episode 7 of 'The History Of Mankind'

The moral of this tale is clear  
If you ever lose your remote for the DVD  
The first place that you should be looking  
Is under your three-seater settee

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Circus Is Gone

Last week the world was alive  
Painted faces, trick cyclists, trapeze  
Hot dogs, burgers, lashings of onions  
Fizzy drinks and cups of teas;

But now the field is empty  
The air over-hanging, confused  
Filled with an eerie new silence  
All the excitement diffused;

A stark vacuum of nothingness  
Devoid of shriek, scream, whirl and reel  
The sorry grass lying pale and parched  
Trampled under the Big Top's heel.

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Cloak Of Night

And now the deep and ominous veil  
Has cast opalescence asplay  
And left the rushing winds  
A distant memory on their way;

The greyness sits on the shoulders  
Of the thoughts of the darkness to come,  
In the distance faint images of fingers  
Flexing the night's strings to strum;

Gone, the brave and optimistic light  
Which stood in the sky so tall  
Banished beneath the suffusive cloak  
Across which the starry night sprawls

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Colour Of Cars

Cars parked in metallic rows  
Like words stacked up in prose  
But only blacks and reds and greys  
Not many colours to choose from nowadays  
No greens or blues or yellows  
Or stark, garish or outlandish fellows

Who would have thought say ten years back  
That a popular colour would be black  
That I could write into this verse  
That most cars would resemble a hearse

I wonder what the trend will be ten years hence  
Maybe cars painted with Cuprinol just like a fence  
Or maybe there will be some other types  
Painted in polka dots, stars or toothpaste stripes

Whatever the trend it should hold true  
That people will still pick their favourite hue  
And adorn their cars be they Honda or Ford  
With stickers that say ' Beware - Baby Aboard'

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Day Is Gone

The heads of the daffodils  
Bob in the fading light  
Like old men in a bar  
The day has had it's fill  
Slowly slips out of sight  
The breezes call from afar;

The lonely hillside  
Bathed in gloom  
Settling the grass to rest  
Village lights abide  
Twinkling in each room  
The day has seen it's best;

Whatever hopes were born  
Dreams lived out  
Or depended upon  
Are now listless, torn  
Scattered all about  
The day has been and gone.

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Day Is Nearly Done

The day is nearly done  
Unblemished by the works of human hand  
With gentle push, the sun slips ever lower  
Beneath horizons, below hilltops, behind houses,  
And lights the long shadows of foreboding;  
Families regather, shelter is sought  
From lonely hillsides to menacing street  
Fires are lit for the evening treat  
In townscapes caught in the unnatural glare  
The false solace of man-made brightness;  
Comfort and anguish mingle together  
Bedpartners in unlikely clasp  
Trying to cancel out mortal peaks and troughs  
Eating the crumbs of comfort  
That the evening brings.

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Day The Ceiling Came Down

The whole thing seemed to happen in a flash  
The dining room ceiling came down with a crash  
Plaster and bricks and narrow timber lath  
Rained down from underneath the bath

The ceiling was wet you see from a recurring leak  
Over a period so long you'd term it antique  
But we thought we'd solved it with some silicone  
Installed by a fella we'd reached on the phone

No such luck - we now have a mess  
And difficult to fix I have to confess  
We reached for trusty sweeping brush and pan  
And decided to place a temporary ban

On anyone walking underneath the scene  
In case something else dropped down between  
The joists, the size of which by the way  
Is seven by three (larger than their counterpart today)

Now Tommy arrived to give us a quote  
And, short of suggesting we buy a boat  
Said it was safe to continue to shower  
And there was no need for a scaffolding tower

He's coming back in four weeks time  
To fix it all up and clear the grime  
Then we'll have a warm and satisfied feeling  
As we gaze lovingly on our new plaster ceiling

Paul Gerard Reed

# The End Of A Day

Finally the noise subsided,  
The day settled  
Suddenly everything had gone by;  
Our hearts cooled,  
The air stilled  
And the stars drained the light from the sky;

The thrill was over,  
Energy spent  
The night listless in it's repose;  
Bringing an uneasy truce  
After all the things done  
The bloom given to the rose;

We know that today  
Was full and fulfilled  
Took joy to an impossible high;  
The laughter resounded,  
Youth is forever  
But gone in the blink of an eye.

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Endless Surge Of Time

We stand in a long line as we grow older  
All pointed towards the exit door  
Watching people joining the end of the queue  
And glimpsing the ghosts that went through before

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Falls O'Clyde

You crawl `neath grimy bridges  
Of your beauty we see not even a trace  
Rub shoulders with concrete walkways  
But you hide a fairer face

For in your upper reaches  
Away from coast and tide  
You crash down in sparkling splendour  
As the mighty Falls o' Clyde

Explosions of crystal water  
Beyond Lanark where you start  
Where otters hide under tree boughs  
And blue Kingfishers dart

This is your spectacular origin  
Lesser known and hidden away  
Pouring relentlessly toward Glasgow  
On this September Sunday

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Final Storm

And to the tenseness I have put my mind  
So strained the conscious thought  
That I have forgotten all I have ever learned  
From whence all this was brought;

Adhered to tasks, through hoops leaped  
Strong-brewed my earthly ale,  
Drunk deeply at the trough of joy  
Turned ruddy from youthful pale;

Bound together stray items loose  
Forged in triumphal feat,  
Slipped deep into despair's vault  
Yet tasted victory sweet;

But now as night lingers ahead  
My elbows worn at life's lathe  
Now a sterner trial awaits  
In the courtroom of my faith

Paul Gerard Reed

# The First Daisy

You caught the corner of my eye  
Snuggled away in frosty grass  
Hiding amongst your green brethren  
Under the feet that pass

You must have lifted your head  
As the chill winds blew hard and surly  
And wished you could have retreated  
For Spring you were much too early

But can I tell you, little daisy  
That to us you are a gift  
The first sign of better days  
Your task our spirits to uplift

How soon the crowds will forget you  
Despite your proud and hardy poses  
When they are engulfed in the scents  
Of the midsummer roses

But this day belongs to you, sweet friend  
You have beaten them all to the punch  
Your loftier pals the daffodils  
The cut flowers by the bunch

Still have their wares to display  
With Winter still their shroud  
But with your sunny central beam  
Stand higher and oh, so proud!

Paul Gerard Reed

# The First Of March

O, wind that blows  
On the first day of March  
That causes the branch to shiver  
And the bough to arch;

That sweeps the pavements  
Cleaner than humand hand  
That freshens the chilly hilltop  
And scours the pastureland;

That finds gaps around the edge  
Of casements in their groan  
Whose glass is the first to see  
The moving air and moan;

O, wind that blows  
In March on this first day  
That wafts our sorrows high above  
And blows our cares away

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Five A Day Myth

They tell you that you need five a day  
Of fruit and veg such as cucumber  
But there's no science behind it at all  
Five is just 'a nice round number'

Four would have been too square a figure  
So the experts thought up a marketing ploy  
Give the public a number they can easily remember  
When they're eating their radish and Bok Choy

So don't count as you eat your peas  
Or enumerate the carrots you digest  
Five is just a nice round number  
Forget the maths, it's best

Just to chomp away on things you like  
As long as you have a few  
If its four or six it doesn't matter  
Good health will still ensue

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Future

Uncork the day as you rise from your slumber  
Not knowing what's next, forge forward and plunder  
Take today in your embrace and wonder  
Why is it that my heart keeps beating?

The next moment is like the last, surprising  
As rivers burst their banks and seas uprising  
Always the unexpected walks next to us, despising  
Man's supposed knowledge of the future

So take the next event at it's face value  
Don't analyse, and ponder, and re-write the past; you  
Instead should wonder at the unpredictability of it all  
That's life's great mystery for us all

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Garden

Deserted by us for vaster climes  
You held nature in your hand  
Broad fences encircling  
Your green and subdued land;

Lofty hedges held safe within  
That safe and primitive lair  
Where the blackbird chose to feast  
And make his crude home there;

Where red-pillowed roses sprang  
From unpromising, dusty soil  
Where scant regard was given  
To pure and honest toil

But where nature first held sway  
And cradled you in this shrine  
Where I could stand at night  
And feel I was a part of thine

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Good Old Days

What is it about the good old days?  
The good old days long gone  
Something you can't quite recreate nowadays  
Something you can't quite put your finger on

But today doesn't have the same allure  
Is it purely down to ourselves?  
That yesterday had a kind of magic  
Despite dust gathering on the shelves

Sifting through an old shoe box  
The old photographs are faded but betray  
An inner peace and contentment  
That is no longer here today

Is it just the loss of youth  
A descent to life's last fling  
Were the old days really better?  
After all the birds still sing

We can still be uplifted  
By the wonders of the world around  
So why does yesterday seem greater?  
Why are we still bound

By the ties of days that have fled  
By the far-flung echoes of the past  
If only we'd kept the magic in a bottle  
We'd drink it now and hold fast

To those rosy memories as we sat  
On the banks of the river of time  
And feel the warm sun on the grass  
In the days that were sublime

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Good Times

I once knew the blossoming of life  
When the horizon ran on for ever  
When there was no necessity  
To sacrifice or joys to sever;  
There is only a limited time now  
And waiting no longer attractive  
I want the good times back  
For a finale hyperactive;  
Not for selfish purposes  
Although it would give me pleasure  
To give gifts to loved ones  
Share times relaxed at leisure;  
To have known things once  
And then have them removed  
Seems a cruelty to have to bear  
Of which you would not have approved;  
I want the good times back  
Although not what I deserve  
It would be a chance to live again  
And the glowing memories preserve.

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Greenhouse That Blew Away

Doing my best to follow the directions  
I joined together all the plastic connections  
I covered it over in pvc sheeting  
As a work of art it took some beating

I anchored it down with metal hooks  
By now I was getting some funny looks  
Undeterred, on went the guy ropes, nice and tight  
I have to admit, it was a beautiful sight!

It looked lovely there, glinting in the sun  
But I knew deep down my work wasn't done  
Because a slight breeze had just arisen  
Which might detach the mainsail from the mizzen

So, with trepidation, I went indoors  
And noticed in the instructions the disclaimer clause  
'This greenhouse will stand up to all sorts of weather  
Except strong winds as it's light as a feather'

The breeze started to become a bit stronger  
The guy ropes seemed to be getting a bit longer  
The frame was easing right, then left, then right again  
As the winds blew harder and it started to rain

The plastic sheeting was taken a battering  
Billowing in the gales and under the rain's spattering  
Then, all of a sudden, one of the guy ropes lifted  
And across the garden the greenhouse drifted

It rose quite gracefully, a bit like a bird  
As it cleared the fence, and the latest I've heard  
It was spotted over Glasgow at three thousand feet  
My wonderful greenhouse, and three bags of peat

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Hill

The hill, draped in mist  
When sun and rain disagree  
Noises magnified through clinging air  
And, somewhere hidden, the sea.

A suspension of time, a view obscured  
An emptiness, a void, a ghostly place,  
Up here on this forgotten hill  
In this lonely space.

The old mill, roofless, toothless  
A hollow husk of yesterday  
Bars to stop the curious  
Invade the sad display.

Outcrops of rock poking  
Through huddled tufts of wiry green,  
Rabbit warrens, spiders webs  
But no-one to be seen.

A trodden path, a way unsigned  
Where those before have gone  
On sunny days when the hill was bathed  
Before grey shadows grew long.

Now the autumn has come to grip  
Now the hill stands bare  
Now all thoughts turn to home  
And all the comforts there.

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Home Of Cricket

The grass is worn in two distinct places  
At opposite ends of the lawn  
Where we stand and take guard  
Where cricketing dreams were born;

This little patch of ground is Lord's in our minds  
But we only encourage (we do not 'sledge')  
The pavilion is the back door to the kitchen  
The boundary rope the hedge;

Our Old Father Time is the chimney pots  
Where the gulls circle around and shriek  
We have no old score books to pore over  
No tradition, no mystique;

But imagination is a powerful thing  
And here I can educate  
My grandsons about Ken Barrington  
Tell them to 'run! ', tell them to 'wait! ! '

My bowling might be only underarm  
But varied with experience and guile  
I throw a series of slow deliveries  
But then a faster one after a while;

Here the fielders are only ghosts  
And the creases are not marked  
But they run to an imaginary place  
On life's journey they have embarked;

The stumps may only be plastic  
And the ball mere rubber foam  
But this is just as good as Lord's  
This, to us, is cricket's home.

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Human Race

The human race over-estimates it's importance  
From mountain top to jungle glade  
We think we own this earth  
As we wear our mantle self-made

Our shining crown of supremacy  
Is worn with self-illusion  
We have an explanation for everything  
But just drown in our own confusion

We announce our own cleverness  
With self congratulatory prizes and gongs  
Place our intellect on a high pedestal  
Not in the place where it belongs

We know nothing at all  
As in our infancy awaking  
And all of the troubles on this earth  
Are of our own self-making

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Invisible Enemy

You prey on those you perceive as weak  
Not for you the courageous streak  
You re-invent yourself in different guise  
And invade the spirit that you despise;

With cunning tiptoe you squirm and wind  
And spread your poison in the kind  
You block the sun and fur the pipe  
Even steal the rags of the guttersnipe;

The soundless tune you raise a notch  
Spread canker, lesion, stain and blotch  
Only to disappear in the dead of night  
With inward breath and scourge of fright,

And then, as if to prove your tempered rigour,  
Reappear at dawn with insouciant vigour  
To stamp on hope with fearless boot  
Lies sustain and truth refute;

Demand replenishment when the well is dry  
Cast cold stare with sightless eye  
Demonise the placid and peaceful soul  
Feast on it's innards from which you stole;

To regenerate your miserable apparition  
The corroded and rotten requisition  
And walk again, though foully lame  
To absolve yourself of any blame

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Journey Begins

And so now the journey begins  
On tender feet with high arch  
To follow the light that never dims  
Past oak and under larch;

Beneath shadows, through fronds  
Across fields of bobbing corn  
To swim oceans or tramp mere ponds  
Through the meadows the poppies adorn;

To be at the very beginning  
Before time has had chance to age  
To stand alongside, to be winning  
The spinning world your stage;

With infirmity not even a dot  
To cloud the whole, clear sky  
When cares not even a jot  
As the breezes of life pass by.

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Joy Of Coming Home

No other journey on earth  
To whatever far-flung land  
Of pleasant hill and shore  
Can match the re-birth  
Of tides reaching home sand  
Of footsteps to your own front door

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Kingdom Of The Rabbit

You proudly gaze over your shadowy kingdom  
From your new perch on the brickwork  
Although now only with photographic eyes  
The light has still not dulled therein

Your home here filled with toys and books and ladders  
A shelter from the storms  
And the safe places in the corners  
Where you would sleep

Amongst the murk your old hutch lying empty  
Little used as you regarded it as a prison  
When there was the endless freedom of the garden  
To be roamed on a sunny day

We wanted another Summer  
But it was not to be  
Although now your picture hangs on the wall  
Perhaps it will still be yours to see

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Kite

The kite struggled out of our hands  
And gave soaring flight to our hopes  
Higher, higher above the land  
Mocked at the hilly slopes

Fluttered and darted in the breeze  
As if the sky had given it birth  
Released from our leaden unease  
It danced above the earth

Set sail across the blue expanse  
Flirted in it's lofty domain  
Put the clouds under it's trance  
Tugged at the twine under strain

Flew defiantly across the sun's beam  
As we shaded our eyes to squint  
But, as if to improve the gleam  
Took the sun's hellish tint

And shone it boldly right through  
It's canvas stretched so taut  
Tried to hold the flames as they spewed  
That never could be caught

Having held sway for just that second  
The kite floated gently down  
But for that fleeting moment had reckoned  
To wear the sun's blazing gown

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Last Day Of June

So, June, you come to an end  
But as you leave I send  
My very best wish and thought;  
For your bee and firefly  
For green of leaf and blue of sky  
You truly owe us nought;  
What could ever be exchanged  
Or contemplate being re-arranged  
For a last day such as this?  
English summer sun on lawn  
New ambition and hopes born  
Wimbledon's first week bliss;  
Pavements hot underfoot  
The scent of grass cut  
Plastic paddling pools filled;  
Strolls along riversides  
Sleepy hilltops and still tides  
White wine glasses chilled;  
Bring on sweet July  
For you and for I  
Let summer play it's tune;  
But take a moment to collect  
This months glories, then reflect  
How wonderful was sweet June

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Last Rose

You were destined to be the last  
Those glorious, heady days that passed!  
With your bud hidden away  
Waiting for another day;

But now your time has finally come  
Though silent now the chirruping scum  
That once thronged and shook the hedge  
Now huddled on some frozen ledge;

So what message do you have for me?  
Lonely rose of tardy beauty  
Did you know that your display, so shy  
Was bound to catch my weary eye?

That your late appearance, so solitary  
The garden's sole blush-red dignitary,  
Would be the one that I remember  
Through the darkened days of wintry November;

If so, you thought correctly  
Your route to my heart found so directly  
You are the one that nature chose  
To gladden my sight as the final rose.

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Little Hill

The little hill  
That looks down to the sea,  
Covered in daisies,  
A sweet place for me,  
As with joyful feet  
We were set free;

The little hill  
That saw winter die,  
Nearer rainbows and heaven  
It holds up the sky,  
Lofting the breezes  
That pass kindly by;

The little hill  
We shared moments rare,  
At the start of spring  
With hope in the air,  
The little hill  
How I wish I was there

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Little White Bookcase

There were only six pieces  
To make the little bookcase  
Two sides, a back, two shelves  
And underneath all these a base  
It took me about twenty minutes  
To ensure the joints were tight  
It looked quite neat as it stood there  
All new and clean and white  
The next morning I arrived to see  
In tribute to quill and pen  
That the shelves were loaded to the brim  
With books about the Mister Men

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Midnight Bell

I stood within the darkness  
For a while  
And watched as fluffy clouds  
Moved silently through the night  
Engulfing the moon  
Until, almost bored  
They glided past  
And the silvery glare was restored;  
Their passage subliminal  
Threw shadows in the deep corners  
Their destiny supraliminal  
Shapes never constant  
Ever-shifting plumes  
Lighter than air;  
Night-time drifters  
Their journey frictionless  
Soundless and friendless  
No-one watching but me;  
No-one to bid them farewell  
As with imperceptible grace  
At the midnight bell  
They slid from view

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Milky Way

Saturday morning  
Refreshed by the rain  
The gulls wheel and whirl  
The air swirls with a pallid face  
And the world with its human race  
Stands for a moment on this ball  
Floating along;  
As we peer out, blind-eyed, toward the Milky Way  
Try to find why we are here  
And are we near  
To destruction;  
This is the shortest day  
We soak up the daylight  
And bathe eyes and mind;  
Who knows what we might find  
As we look at the Milky Way  
On this becalmed morning  
On a Saturday.

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Missing Piece Of The Jigsaw

We did a jigsaw  
You and me  
One afternoon  
Before our tea

We sorted out the pieces  
Into middles and edges  
We stacked separately  
The flowers and the hedges

We concentrated hard  
To find the bits that would fit  
We turned them around  
And scratched our heads a bit

At last we were nearly finished  
But one final piece we sought  
After all that time and effort  
We were still one bit short!

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Moment

I know now what the weekend was about  
I think I knew it in my bones;  
It was all about a single moment  
That you granted to me  
One that took me back to '73.

There was no victory in store  
That outcome not pre-destined;  
But you had a sweet special time  
On Sunday afternoon to unveil  
For the heights my heart to scale.

Just like then I sat  
With pent-up eagerness and hope;  
Then full of youth, now with pride  
Then, when the second arrived  
Events melted together as you had contrived.

I leapt in the air  
Heart brimming over with triumph;  
As I landed back on the ground  
Thinly, through my excited furor  
Came the truth that there would be no more.

For our lives are a series of moments  
Of sweetness, despair and joy;  
Such emotions do not linger  
Far better their fleeting nature to recognise  
And let the stars fall from our eyes.

I sadly turned and left the room  
And tasted the gentle fresh air;  
Revelled in the moment you had granted  
And stored away my second's pleasure  
As just a memory to always treasure.

Paul Gerard Reed

# The New One (Jess)

A new face appeared at our door  
With puppy dog eyes to implore  
Us to join you in your dance  
As around the garden you began to prance;

Your paws with joyous, youthful bound  
Ran over our hallowed ground  
And unknowingly, in immature play  
You swept the intervening years away;

You leapt up to lick the face  
Of everyone in the place  
Shook black tail with fluffy white spot  
Slurped from the offered water pot;

Paused momentarily because it  
Was time to leave a small deposit,  
Before taking up again your puppy dog poses  
O well, that will be good for the roses!

What treasured thoughts you brought to the fore  
Reviving great walks from the past once more  
When we caught our breath in the summer breeze  
As we strode out over the Leas;

When we braved blizzard, slanting rain and hailstone  
To supple limb and strengthen bone  
When we walked through the endless nights  
And put the world to rights;

When we formed an unbeatable team  
With spirits high and minds to dream  
When we defied the thundery clouds above  
When we discovered the true meaning of love

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Nightmare Half Of The Draw

We have an opportunity, I suppose  
To go and win the Euros  
But will we ever join the elite  
When all we can think of is defeat?

We already believe we have no chance  
Were we to meet Germany, Spain, Italy or France  
They must be rubbing their hands with glee  
At our pessimistic mentality

It really sticks in the craw  
To recoil from the half of the draw  
That might pit us against such teams  
It's really not as bad as it seems

For the Germans are not making a fuss  
About the possibility of playing us  
The Italians don't approach with dread  
The prospect of playing England ahead

So already we have lost the psychological battle  
The chance the French cage to rattle  
Instead of describing the draw as 'nightmare'  
We should be proud that England's there

And let the others complain about  
The way the draw has panned out  
So this notion of a nightmare - let's bin it  
Let's get out there and go and win it!

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Old Familiar Walk

The old familiar walk  
We took again today  
Down the hill, across the road  
By terraces built to stay;  
The long, slim gardens we admire  
Although now wintry and forlorn  
But renewed when Summer comes  
With bright border and trim lawn;  
You have learned to walk steadily  
Along the low brick wall  
Finding your feet, as in life  
Growing up, now not so small;  
At the end I lift you down  
Afraid of stumbles and trips  
Then past the prickly hedgerow  
Where we collect rose hips;  
Now we race on separate paths  
Your new shoes clatter and din  
At the finishing line you stand triumphant  
Not knowing I let you win;  
There will come a time, of course  
When my defeat will not be feigned  
When your feet are swifter than mine  
With all my energy drained;  
We dance through the underpass  
Our voices echo and amplify  
Where the rainstorms cannot reach  
Or wet clothes undignify;  
The end of our trail is reached  
And we take a kindly look  
At a building of which we are fond  
With its row on row of books;  
Will all that we see now be gone  
When a hundred years have passed?  
Our footsteps just fade away  
Because nothing can ever last.

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Old House

I went back to the old house last night  
The house where I was born  
Things were just the way they used to be  
The 'Scarlet Climber' still on the thorn

I cut the grass and measured each step  
Along the winding stripes, dark green and pale  
Felt the softness beneath my feet  
Felt the scythe in my hand to flail

Noted every boundary, step and joint  
Every inch where I had placed my feet  
Back then in the good old days  
Our house at the top of the street

Stood again in the greenhouse  
That safe haven from all of life's ills  
Where once the earthy scent of tomato plants  
Every corner and crevice filled

Felt the sharp frost on my thumbs  
As the sprouts were prised away from the stalk  
Found the hidden gap in the back hedge  
I climbed through on the school walk

Entered solemnly the hallowed ground  
Past the coal house and in the back door  
The little kitchen still stood there  
Just as it had before

I examined each room, each stick of furniture  
Opened each door and looked inside  
The living room that was the heart  
The bedroom where you died

I loved this place so much  
Left behind in life's slipstream  
I went back to the old house last night  
But it was only in a dream

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Optimism Of Morning

The optimism of morning;  
When all is laid before us,  
When plans are made  
And courses set  
For races yet to be run;  
When the air is fresh with dew  
And things have not yet begun;  
When nothing is spoilt  
The clock yet to sweep the face;  
When all things seem settled  
With the human race;  
We are at the start-  
With uplifted spirits  
And renewed hopes,  
Soaring to the mountain tops  
Up the grassy slopes;  
We have everything to gain  
Even if the sky should darken  
And be filled with rain;  
For this is the morning  
And life starts all over again

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Other Side Of The Earth

The sombre time when daylight starts to fade  
When the day has outworn its uplifting parade  
And the high-pitched songs of the raucous morning  
Have slipped from the embrace of the hopeful dawning

How can the other side of the earth still have day?  
When ours has so surely dribbled away  
How can our joyful hours have taken flight?  
And be mere shadows when so recently bright

How can others be lifting their heads?  
From the sun-drenched pillows of their beds  
And be yet to entwine with the midday bloom  
Whilst we are submerged in foreboding and gloom

Give me an earth wrapped around in glorious sun!  
Where the course of the day can never be run  
When the darkness can no longer make us forlorn  
Where the ending of the precious day is forsworn

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Passage Of Time

Today will soon be a yesterday  
As we take the wrapping off tomorrow  
Diary pages are thumbed and then turned over  
As the days become the weeks that follow

Weekends come and go with bright intervals  
And intermissions of better things  
But the months end still approaches  
Calendars are slid over their binding rings

Autumns golden hues become the white of stark winter  
And the sun struggles against the cold  
But when the spring finally arrives  
Crocuses and daffodils unfold

Rich pastures emerge in the summer  
With the tranquil buzzing of bees  
The sun shines down contentedly  
Gentle breezes rustle trees

Then, as in a full circle  
The year has passed us by  
Autumn reappears before we know it  
In the blinking of an eye

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Path

With glad rags and costumes  
And tokens of yesteryear  
We set out upon the path  
That knew all too well we were there;

With age-worn craft and wizenend guile,  
It wound this way and that through our troubles,  
Lollipop alliums floating each side,  
A sea of purple bubbles;

Although separated along the way  
Taking each turn and bend,  
We knew that we would be together  
When we finally reached the end;

We lingered awhile at sun-warmed bricks  
Piled high in a Victorian wall,  
The joints that had absorbed such cares  
Like eyes that had seen it all;

Seeing us now, standing there  
Under the subdued haze,  
It soaked up our worried frowns  
And turned them to brighter days;

Lending support under it's lofty coursing  
Alongside the weary track  
It surged us onward to our destination  
And told us not to look back;

The walk finally over  
All finery was cast aside  
We donned the clothes of life  
And climbed back onto the ride

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Pile Of Stones

You collected and made a pile of stones  
And excitedly invited me outside  
To view this gravelly incarnation  
Which you looked upon with pride

This product of youthful imagination  
Heaped rather sorrowfully in wind and rain  
But to you it was a magic castle  
For your eager mind to explain

To me, the hard-bitten adult  
With no wonder left in my bones  
Just the cares of carving a way forward  
No time for those grubbed-up stones

But seeing your wondrous cairn now  
After you have gone back home  
Reminded me of your excitement  
In building that stoney dome

And how I should have joined in  
But for the ingrained woes of the day  
And how I should have freed my mind  
To let the adult play

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Pit Pony

I found out with sadness about your plight  
Your life lived in perpetual night  
An underground stable was where you roomed  
An innocent life entombed

You were so trusting and willing  
You must have dreamt of fulfilling  
The wish to be back above ground  
With green fields and trees all around

For fifty weeks a year this was your cell  
With hot grimy air and sulphuric smell  
Until that wonderful liberation  
That exhilarating rising sensation

Of the pit cage approaching ground level  
With you on board about to revel  
In the freedom of the new fresh air  
With pastures around you everywhere

Behold for a fortnight at ground zero  
This doughty and unsung equine hero  
Far from Epsom and the thoroughbred race  
Whose life was entwined with the black coal face

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Poor Quantity Surveyor

The creativity of an architect  
Is never questioned or pondered,  
The calculations of a structural engineer  
Are never drifted away from or wandered,  
The mechanical engineer  
Pronounces assuredly with scientific fanfare,  
Nobody challenges the number of changes per hour  
That he has applied to the air;  
The electrical engineer  
Gives us ohm, volt and watt  
Nobody stands up and shouts  
That there is something he must have forgot,  
These disciplines and others  
With this singular advantage are blessed  
For as soon as a quantity surveyor mentions a figure  
Everybody else suddenly knows best

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Queue For Valhalla

We stood in the queue, as in life  
Waiting patiently for our turn  
The sun shone down on our backs  
Trying it's best to burn;

As protection against future onslaught  
Our figures were wreathed and caped  
'Blackpool Pleasure Beach' was announced  
On our plastic ponchos proudly draped;

But as the minutes passed, you grew silent  
Something was clearly amiss  
You were afraid, no longer excited,  
Not quite ready for this;

The numbers in front dwindled  
The forthcoming test grew nearer  
Suddenly we no longer craved the thrill  
Normality suddenly seemed much dearer;

So, with as much dignity as could be wrought,  
Not noticed by many, I hope  
We discreetly left the others to 'Valhalla'  
And ducked out under the rope

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Ridge

We are sitting on the ridge  
Looking down at our youth  
Which lies forlorn in the valley;  
We have burnt each bridge  
In search of the truth  
For our spirits to rally;  
Each one of us a sepia image  
Transfixed in time  
Thoughts no longer golden;  
Hurled by the world's scrimmage  
We have lost the rhyme  
Our pasts in trust beholden.

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Sea

Open skies and taut horizon line  
Seaweed strands that feet entwine  
The haunting rhythm of waves and sea  
The thought that this world belongs to me;

To know these things when you are young  
To know that freedom's song is sung  
To skip with joy on tide-firmed sand  
On the beauteous fringes of the land;

Bring me the sea breeze, tinged with cold  
In the days far off when I am old  
To know that I once stood here, wild and free  
That I once gazed out over the sea

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Sheep

Through the slit windows I spy  
Gentle snow flakes hurrying by  
Headlights shine in, then as quickly leave  
Unknowing of my fate, I cannot grieve;

But you know, you that have put me here,  
Your planning and cold thoughts were clear  
Because I have no tears with which to cry  
You have sentenced me to die;

Now whizzes past the ice cold morning air  
There is grass and freedom to be tasted out there  
But through the slit windows, all I spy  
Are gentle snow flakes hurrying by

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Siege Of York

Sixteen forty two was the year  
Canoneers and gunners alike  
Thomas Coatsworth and others of his ilk  
Employed musket ball and pike

Lord Fairfax and his army were in York  
Some of whom were from Hull  
All gathered there to lay siege  
With gunmetal glinting or dull

Blood letting was the aim  
Of many a maniacal mind that day  
To force the result by arms and swipe  
Brave soldiers flesh to flay

Centuries later mass graves were found  
And the common notion laid void  
Men who died not of battle wounds  
But laid low with virus typhoid

So instead of dying with battle honours  
And Royalty flag to seize  
These men simply laid down and died  
Not slain but from deadly disease

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Sky Blue Vest

Sky blue vest not quite reaching  
Dark blue shorts forming breeching  
A small stain, hard to detect  
Bare feet with no shoes to protect

Standing at the foot of the stairs  
Just a little moment amongst your cares  
Bravely hiding your tears in the cold  
But an image I will always hold

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Snowdon Lily

It's delicate white face only fleetingly seen  
In unlikely places for hope to fledge  
Vaunted high above in mountainous scene  
Precarious home in crevasse and on ledge

No tales to tell and no tears to weep  
But survival it's merry theme  
In rocky terrain it's roots to creep  
Clinging high under cold sunbeam

For the Snowdon lily this lofty setting  
Where tired feet arrive and then depart  
With climber's backward glimpse regretting  
The leaving of this brave white heart

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Sore Toe

Now he's had a bit of trouble  
He wanted some help and 'on the double'  
He just didn't know which way to go  
To get some help with his sore big toe

He'd heard about ladies on their pampering days  
Who popped in for a foot spa and a bit of a laze  
All sat with their feet dangling whilst they dozed  
And Garra Rufa fish nibbling their toes

So he asked his doctor, was it a good plan  
To have a foot spa and emerge a new man  
With big toe healed, all glistening new  
And toe nail no longer growing askew

But he was worried, he still had a doubt  
As to what the process was all about  
And instead of relaxation he might feel dejection  
At the prospect of water-borne infection

So, before giving his little piggies ease  
He asked the Doc if the water was free of disease  
Fishy foot spas sounded a good idea, but  
He didn't want to risk getting athletes foot

The doctor, by now irritated, rose from his seat  
And before he knew it, removed the nail complete  
&quot;Forget your quack remedies, it's gone without a trace  
Now you can hammer that fat lass in the 6 mile race! &quot;

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Start Of The Day

We lay together  
As grouse crouched in the heather  
As crows argued in the trees outside  
As the milk float's brakes were applied

We watched the light creep through the blinds  
As the night released it's binds  
As the gulls swept through the air  
As the fox settled in his lair

We listened as the noisy replaced the hushed  
As teeth were brushed  
As horseshoes trampled the downs  
As faces remembered their frowns  
As the blackbird began his song  
As the crowd became a throng

We fried eggs in a pan  
As the day began

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Strong And The Weak

It was long ago in cold winter days  
That I learend the solemn truth  
That the fast out-ran the slow  
On the muddy pitches of my youth;

It was long ago in lamp-lit streets  
As the moon wrapped the night in it's gown  
I learned that the strong overcame the weak  
And brought them crashing down;

I can still see these things  
Through the shroud of time's haze  
Being trampled in the mud  
Out-fought in those long-lost days

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Sum Of All My Parts

I am the sum of all my parts  
All of which were gifted to me  
Do not look a gift horse in the mouth  
Don't change what was meant to be;  
For if I think a part is faulty  
And you promise me a replacement new  
I will no longer be me any more  
And you, no longer you

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Sun Is My Friend

The sun is my friend  
Knowing no bounds or prisons  
Nor does it depend  
On any man's decisions;

It reaches through the blinds  
To warm your heart and soul  
And as the day unwinds  
Turns into a glowing coal;

Then, when heavy skies obscure  
It's mighty molten mass  
It remains patient and pure  
Knowing the clouds will pass;

Sun, take our darkened night  
Take our troubles away  
Bring your warmth and light  
To make another day.

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Sweetest Kiss

Scottish winds blew hard the rain  
Across man's neat-laid plans  
Threw them into disarray again  
Rattled windows, shook caravans;

And all along the famous green  
Stood bold men waiting for their fate  
Pride, fury and glory, caught atween  
Clock re-set for Monday date;

The gusts blew one to the fore  
A humble man, yet steely set  
The claret jug not touched before  
Awaiting acclaim and epithet;

Smiling, dignity and emotion to conserve  
As the back-slaps and joyous hugs gripped  
He had managed to keep his nerve  
Stay calm, in control, tight-lipped

But behind the well-wishing crowds  
Stood one, above all the rest  
The one who had chased away his clouds  
And inspired him to play his best;

Their eyes met and they embraced  
His cool stature suddenly amiss  
His emotions to the surface raced  
As she planted the sweetest kiss;

He knew in that special moment  
The enormity of what he had achieved  
Not past winners' dethronement  
But the knowledge that she had believed.

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Test

Not the pain,  
Not the grinding weariness;

Not the rain,  
Not the blinding teariness;

The test is not of these  
Or of skill inherent

That could be used with ease;  
No - the test is of the spirit

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Undead

We are the undead of the recession  
Fluttering on, but with wings clipped  
Recalling past glories and the good times  
Chances gone and dignity stripped  
Squeezed first, then mercilessly crunched  
Our hopes left triple-dipped.

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Voice

We are all comfortable in our red high-backed chairs  
Our judgement respected, which nothing impairs  
We listen intently to the loud faceless voices  
As we consider who shall become our choices

We sit ever tighter and stroke our reputation  
We even compare notes without affectation  
For straining and errors we become glutton  
As we implore the others to push the red button

We think "that's a great voice" but our seats still don't turn  
And then a shameful feeling inside starts to burn  
We can hear the yearning and can hear the passion  
But are our selections determined by fashion?

If we picked that person would it make us uncool?  
Might young people think us old fools?  
We'd better just leave that button alone  
Wait for a 'hip' voice to woo with it's drone

So our advice to you singers with tones magic  
Avoid this pre-ordained brush with the tragic  
Don't try and adapt to be in the vogue  
Signed , Wilson, Jones and Minogue

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Wall

The sun-scorched stone has stored the years  
Baked-in memories, mildew-defying  
Lying so serenely on borders of fields  
Defining the setting out of lands;  
The hands that built you long since perished  
But you live on, in deadness  
In weight and demarcation  
Irregular and regular,  
Drying out and cracking,  
Unblinded by the winter sun;  
Striations and strata in bonds  
Layered as a hard boundary  
Marking old territories  
Dividing man from man  
And rich from poor;  
An obstacle to climb, to be overcome  
A bookmark within the world's pages  
Separating one from another  
Telling us that this was the place.

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Wallet

When I was twenty one  
I received a gift of farewell  
A leather wallet from colleagues  
The future it could not tell;  
But every single day since then  
For thirty five years in all  
I kept that wallet in my jacket  
On every day I can recall;  
It sometimes held a lot of money  
Notes bulging out at the sides  
More often it held just a few  
As flew past the time and tides;  
It still holds precious pictures  
Tucked away in the zip at the back  
I look at them lovingly when I need  
To get back on the right track;  
The edges are now all rubbed and scuffed  
It has lost its shiny lustre  
It looks a little ragged now  
Despite spit, polish and duster;  
Now, most days it sits empty  
Useless to a great extent  
No longer bursting at the seams  
And all the money spent;  
But still I will never replace it  
For those pictures bring me hope  
No matter what the future brings  
I know that I can cope

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Wind Blew

The wind blew it's hardest  
Helping the rain's lashes  
Blowing through balustrades  
And gaps in window sashes  
Upturning wheely bins  
And bottles of milk  
Displacing hats  
And billowing silk  
Howling over hilltops  
Blasting over the ridge  
Causing traffic chaos  
Closing the Forth Bridge

Paul Gerard Reed

# The World As It Used To Be

I saw the world as it used to be  
Glimpsed through the tent's open flap  
Sun-warmed daisies in a carpet of green  
Dog's paws stretched out and taking a nap

The smell of Sunday dinner cooking  
Lawnmowers whirring their busy sound  
The way I used to feel returned  
When contentment was all around

Safe in the tent we played with trains  
And the thought then occurred to me  
This is the world now for my grandsons  
Just like it used to be for me

Paul Gerard Reed

# The World Is Alright

The world is alright  
Though your eyes show fear  
There is nothing to worry about  
Everything is fine, my dear

We act on this big stage  
We are grown-ups playing our part  
It is all just a big game  
It will never fall apart

How can I reassure you further?  
Please believe in me  
There is nothing to be afraid of  
The world is beautiful, you see

Such is my message to childhood  
Be happy and laugh out loud  
No tears to gather in your eyes  
My pledge to you avowed

The world is alright  
Though your eyes show fear  
There is nothing to worry about  
Leave that to us, my dear

Paul Gerard Reed

# The World Moved An Inch

Were these words ever to mean anything to anybody  
The ingrained meanings ever held up in the future  
An importance to be attached to them  
Or with a reverence with which men treat such things;  
That my life might have meant something to somebody  
That my desires and wishes were unselfish  
That I would be missed when I was no longer there  
That someone might have loved me;  
If in the tumult of mankind I could be recognised  
As not a warrior or a fighting man  
But to have owned a quiet courage and determination  
And was proud to be myself and not another;  
If it could be seen that I would never hurt anyone  
Rather to absorb and treat that hurt inwardly  
That my home was a place where others wanted to be  
To share what was there;  
That an invisible statue could be erected in my dreams  
To set out what I stood for  
And that the world moved an inch  
Because I existed

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Wren

Stepping warily into a grey morning  
With mist shrouding the hedgerows  
Damp pavements and frost-bitten walls  
Thick socks on to protect the toes

All seemed lifeless and a little forlorn  
The way things feel now and then  
Until uplifted by a crescendo of sound  
The defiant song of the wren

He was perched high on a tree branch  
Like a little ball of string  
And looked down at me enquiringly  
As he reached into his heart to sing

I stood enthralled and listened intently  
To his optimistic shrill  
Transfixed, I gazed upward at him  
And marveled at his will

Which had defeated the winter  
Without hat and coat to don  
I raised my eyes again to see him  
But in that moment he had gone

Paul Gerard Reed

# The Year Turns Old

The afternoon slumbers slowly on  
Chill winds abated and rainfall held  
On high, black and grey billows are seen;  
Not yet autumn nor the end of summer  
A time without a season  
A state of in between

Mark well these uncertain days  
No fire yet in the grate  
For soon the burnished red and gold  
Will lay its shifting regal carpet  
Filling borders and under hedges  
To turn the new year old

Paul Gerard Reed

# There Was A Time For You

There was a time for you  
When things were hard  
But still sparkling bright with hope;  
I see old grainy films  
That tried to capture it  
Reaching back up time's slope;  
Now there is a time for me  
But it is running out  
My chance has almost gone;  
That old grainy film  
Will soon be showing me  
As I hand the baton on.

Paul Gerard Reed

# These Familiar Walls

These familiar walls  
That listened to the story of our lives,  
Seen the glorious triumphs  
The sad and sorry nosedives,

And watched so patiently  
As we made all our trite mistakes  
Jumped for unembarrassed joy  
And suffered the sad heartaches;

Unflinchingly took the pins  
That hung treasures of yesterdays  
The drawings and the scribblings  
Of such lovely immature ways,

Stood proudly over the mantle  
Bedecked with memories in frames  
The glorious sunny days of childhood,  
The laughter and the games;

Never again will we be able  
To taste undiluted life so pure,  
Or suffer the trials and tests  
That the spirit has to endure,

Never again will we be able  
To live those second days of youth,  
Never again will we be able  
To so fervently seek the truth

Paul Gerard Reed

# These Walls

When all the hard work is over  
And the day slowly bleeds to dusk  
The hard-spun hymns of hope  
Still hang in the air like musk;

Guardians of other groups from the past  
The walls stand silent and defiant  
On us, they look a little surprised  
But on their history we are not reliant;

For we have forged something special here  
Under their faceless glower  
An untiable knot of love  
An ever-opening flower;

So, stand unmoved at your side-lines  
In your rigid stance set fast  
Watch as we live with pure joy  
And over-write the past.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Things Will Turn

Things will turn  
I know they will  
Together let us pray;  
Fortunes will change  
They surely will  
On one golden day

Paul Gerard Reed

# Things You Find In A Hedge

Lying hidden amongst the twigs and greenery for decades  
Thrown-away newspapers, milk cartons and deaf aids;

Birds nests, spiders webs, a moth-eaten old sock,  
Discarded tins of lager, deflated balls, a shuttlecock;

A tale of the past lies entangled in our hedgerows  
Sandwich wrappers, pie crusts, bits of food left to decompose;

Empty wallets, old toy cars and mangled napkin rings  
What history can be gleaned from such disparate things!

Paul Gerard Reed

# Thirty Nine Steps

The steps number thirty nine  
Each, a year along the way,  
Every step a memory of mine  
Since we met that sacred day;

Years of passing seasons  
Spring and Fall anew,  
In them all the reasons  
I shared each one with you;

Time has not eroded  
The magic spell still cast,  
Unshakeable, uncorroded  
A love that was built to last.

Paul Gerard Reed

# This Lovely Day

"This lovely day  
Has flown away,  
Auf Wiedersehen, Sweetheart"  
- Vera Lynn

This lovely day  
Will never come again  
We walked in the breeze  
Felt spots of rain

This lovely day  
Has come to a close  
But we will never forget  
The sun as it arose

And shone over us  
On this lovely day  
When we were together again  
With so much to say.

Paul Gerard Reed

# This Place

This place has everything;  
The air moves more easily over the land  
Uplifting fluttering streamers and kites  
And drifting the reluctant sand

Everything is laid out in front of you here  
A space to roam and breathe and run  
The horizon line seldom obscured  
And no clouds over the sun

Here in Spring amongst grassy mounds  
The skylark's precious eggs are hidden  
Wherein life to songstress is granted  
Then from earth to heaven bidden

This is a place to sit and reflect  
On life and it's queasy embrace  
A chance to feel at one with the world  
A chance to feel at one with this place

Paul Gerard Reed

# This Summer

This Summer will never be here again  
We cannot relive it;  
For our memories we cling dear  
For the moment until they too fade  
And disappear.

We will look back and think of these  
As golden days;  
When the turmoil and struggles are over  
We will see the calm and the clear  
And hold these days dear.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Thomas Gainsborough

Your oils lie on canvas  
Now over two centuries old  
But then, so deftly and quickly painted  
With brushstrokes skilfull and bold

The magical blur from your hand  
More deceptive than thimblerigs  
We still draw breath today  
At 'The Blue Boy' or 'Girl With Pigs'

Were you ever given to dream  
That your works would still draw eyes' gaze  
Under a hundred thousand dusts  
And setting suns to end the days

Paul Gerard Reed

# Those Who Really Care

Spend a day in my shoes  
Toe my dusty line,  
Then which would you rather choose  
Your shoes, or mine?

Firstly, they're a bit scuffed  
Yours might gleam and shine,  
Mine are rubbed, creased and roughed  
Not a good sign;

The soles are worn  
To almost paper-thin,  
A car would have a SORN  
If in the same state they're in;

But, funny how my shoes tell  
Which is friend or foe,  
For some they ring a warning bell  
A sorry tale of woe;

But others don't mind what you've got  
Or what clothes you wear,  
For possessions matter not a jot  
To those who really care.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Thoughts On Poetry

Poetry should be written, and read or listened to  
In solitude, in calmness  
Where inspiration can spawn great thoughts  
Not read out at massed gatherings  
Where people compete for attention,  
Promoted like cheap merchandise,  
"Look at me, I'm a poet"  
Poetry is not about 'getting it out there'  
Unless it's stated aim is solely to entertain;

Solemn thoughts cannot rest in a crowded place  
Poetry is a quiet moment in a quiet room  
When there is time for reflection and profoundness,  
Poetry is individual and personal  
But can send out a lifeline of understanding  
For others to share and hang onto;  
Poetry is free, not forced  
And, although guided by the poet  
Ultimately goes it's own way;  
Poetry is not a concert or a frivolity  
Poetry is something that moves you  
But not the person next to you,  
For everyone hears with different ears  
And reads with different eyes,  
Poetry can only resound in the silence  
That follows the breath.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Thrill

With perpetual cycle, we seek peace  
When it arrives, we seek thrill;  
We tire of that and long for normality  
Grassy riverbanks and waters still  
We languish, semi-contented  
Innocuous days start to bore  
With heavy hearts we turn again  
To seek the thrill once more

Paul Gerard Reed

# Through A Filter

Seeing the world through a filter  
A prism that deflects the light  
Put up a fight;  
Dont give in, for givers-in never win  
Fight back;  
Dont lack courage  
Take the next breath and dig right back in  
Go back to the beginning if you have to  
Remind yourself of the things you love  
And rise above the gloom  
Let optimism bloom  
Let hopes take flight  
And defeat the night

Paul Gerard Reed

# Through The Woods

The way ahead curved and bent  
Through the wizened trunks either side  
And with each step secret vista uncoiled  
Further distraction with each stride;

The dried and rutted mud path pointed the way  
Between bluebell carpet and ancient tree  
The harsh call of the wind was persuaded  
To blow a soothing leaf-melody;

Across the fields it had made it's chilling sweep  
But in the woods a mere sigh,  
It's tranquil and restful message played  
To the song-making birds on high;

And in this place there paced no other feet  
To spoil the becalming of our minds,  
No other eyes peering out to spy on us  
Through the twiggy blinds

Until, at last, we felt absorbed  
In this land of sunken roots and steady boughs  
At a great depth away from the world  
In a stillness that life seldom allows.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Tidy Desks

We sit at our tidy desks  
And dream of wild days by the sea  
We collect our papers together  
And think of what might be;

A shaft lighting the dust  
Through a tiny slit  
Come filtered good times  
The memories flit;

Cherished times, momentous times  
Things beyond the glass  
As we sit at our tidy desks  
And watch the time pass.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Timeless

Time has tried to damp the fire  
And left it's veil of dust,  
Tried to sap the forces of desire  
Turn the gleam to rust;

But you are timeless, then and now  
As rivers endlessly flow,  
No matter when and no matter how  
No matter where you go;

For as the sun will rise and set  
As the moon will wax and wane,  
Eternity in a moment is met  
And so it will remain.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Tiny Beetle

O, tiny beetle  
Across our floor you crawled  
Unaware of our presence  
Your scattering feet scrawled

A kind of helpless dance  
Along that slippery floor  
Not knowing where you were going  
Or what you were there for

Although first instinct  
Was to crush you underfoot  
That was quickly stemmed  
As I saw you in your rut

And thought of myself  
In just the same vein  
Making the same mistakes  
Over and over again

Rushing headlong  
To the wrong destination  
Immune to the truth  
And dumb to sensation

So gently I picked up  
This tiny dot of black  
Carried you outside and  
Lowered you into a pavement crack

Paul Gerard Reed

# To A Child Unborn

Listen, future child unborn  
Not imagined in the womb,  
Read these words of yesterday  
As if I were in the room;

For ingrained in every passion  
That you hold or dislikes accrue,  
I am silently guiding your path  
In everything that you do;

I did not invent this route  
From the cloth I have been torn,  
For I too am carrying the torch  
I am the past reborn;

For death alone could not part us  
My seed was cast anew,  
And although you do not know it,  
I am still a part of you.

Paul Gerard Reed

# To Be A Boy Again

I know I am going somewhere  
That would gladden any heart  
I am going back to places I loved  
When almost at the very start;  
To the windy top of Skiddaw  
To the slopes of Honister Pass  
Where as a boy I used to run  
Up the steep and heathery grass;  
To feel the freedom in my veins  
To taste the mountain air  
To remember how things used to be  
In the days when I was there;  
To touch the heights of serenity  
To be downpoured in the rain  
I am going back to the golden past  
To be a boy again.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Toby

I once was your companion true  
Through the harsh times of yesteryear  
I braved the bitter gales with you  
Under the moonlit skies so clear;

We entered the dark nights together  
With no fear, for we had each other  
We walked to the end of our collective tether  
Your anxious feelings I smothered;

But now I am no longer at your side  
And nearly everyone has forgotten me  
But just as surely as the returning tide  
I will never stray from your memory.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Today

To each day  
Let there be joy confined therein  
Such that the day is a perfect entity  
With no fear of the night;  
Let faces be shining and happy  
And laughter fill the air  
And sweep the hills;  
Let the moments be drawn out  
And strung together  
In a seamless robe  
To wrap the whole day around;  
Let us live for now  
And not dread tomorrow.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Together

So now, with time running astray  
The days and years ebbing away  
With no further brake that can be applied  
No way to turn back the intrushing tide;

Not for us the leisured existence of the tree  
Who long outlasts the likes of you and me,  
No, our term is a much swifter one  
In a short spell our job is done;

But what we have that the tree does not  
The thing he lacks that we have got  
As he stands alone in the stormy weather  
We came through all the storms together.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Togetherness (Cows In A Field)

We have chosen to lie together  
In this corner of a field of lush grass  
No-one told us to do it;  
We made our own minds up.

It is a long, large field  
We could have picked any spot,  
But we picked this one.

We don't argue amongst ourselves  
For we are peaceful sorts.

We have had quite a nice day  
Munching grass and looking at things,  
But then we got a bit tired  
And needed to lie down.  
Which we did.  
Here,  
In this corner of a field of lush grass.

There is a respectable space between each one of us  
Enough space to allow us to feel unhampered  
But close enough to know we are together.

We are all of the same mind  
Although we didn't discuss things first  
We all just drifted to this corner  
And lay down.

Later in the morning we will all get up  
And chew some grass.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Tomorrow And Today

With the peeling back of our cares  
Comes the opening up of the sky,  
Just as surely, revealing her wares,  
The clouds roll slowly by;

For one droll day in the sun  
When youth held us in it's lazy hand,  
When life was endless and fun  
And tomorrow just another strand;

And settled on the daisied grass  
A new Spring has found it's way,  
And all the others we let slip pass  
Merge slowly into today.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Tomorrow Will Be Good

To walk freely across sunny fields  
In peaceful times, in open lands,  
To be learning on days such as these  
From older and wiser hands;

To feel tomorrow will be good  
That there is something worth hoping for,  
To be still fresh and pure of blood  
Life still an open door;

To have a fullness, never to feel hollow  
From innocent ways and innocent deeds,  
To have the unshakable faith to follow  
Where the steep path of life leads.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Town Hall Clock

Faintly, through the grey morning  
I heard the chiming of the Town Hall clock  
Distantly counting it's stock;

Feebly carried on the breeze  
As if from another world  
Whilst under blankets, toes curled;

The sonorous tone dispersed  
In the mist and the miles between  
Your lofty origin unseen;

Yet making it's threadbare connection  
Over the streets' bricks and wood  
From a place where I have often stood;

How often it is that we ignore  
The understated notes, the little voices  
But those in which the heart rejoices;

Peal out your timid contribution  
Without fear of it's shy expressage  
For I have heard your quiet message

Paul Gerard Reed

# Traffic Jam

Winding rivers of red tail lights  
Winding away into the night  
All stuck in a jam and having regret  
No land speed records being set

Audi, Fiat, Honda and Ford  
All in a queue and getting rapidly bored  
Did car manufacturers ever know  
That 'Gran Turismo' would mean 'so slow'?

Late for concerts and supper dates  
Late for meetings with your mates  
Late for getting home and watching TV  
Late to put the oven on and make the tea

But wait a minute! It's not all sour!  
We're moving again at 5 miles per hour  
But don't go ordering the celebration cakes  
We've had to go and stamp again on the brakes

We're in a jam and ground to a halt  
Is it really anyone's fault?  
Not mine, for certain, so don't blame me  
I'm only trying to get home for my tea!

Paul Gerard Reed

# Trail Together

We have been on this trail together, you and I  
With lots of highs and lots of lows,  
We've known some good times and some bad times  
That's the nature of life, I suppose;

But when I think back now and review  
Though years have passed, ahead still everything,  
I'm glad we've been on this trail together, you and I  
And I wouldn't have swapped it for anything

Paul Gerard Reed

# Train Ride

Rolling stock metal-on-metal glides  
Cutting a swathe through English countryside  
Measuring relentlessly the length of our land  
Day diminishing unspoken under God's hand

We sit, facing each other but not speaking  
Carriages grinding and dry brakes squeaking  
Rhythmically topping sleepers set under the track  
Sun setting quickly as the day turns it's back

Porters staggering and lurching, replenishing our cups  
Spying from the window, cables looping up, and down and up  
All dreaming of home; the journey's highlight  
Viewing in fast forward, England in twilight

Paul Gerard Reed

# Trauma Or Collateral

It's going to be a barnstormer  
The new gritty ITV drama 'Trauma'  
But scheduled at a time strangely bilateral  
The first episode of the BBC drama 'Collateral'

Which will you watch this evening at nine?  
I'm confident which choice will be mine  
For the fate of both is already sealed  
I will be watching 'Julius Caesar - Revealed'

Paul Gerard Reed

# Treasure

We are building up a stock of days  
To call upon when we grow old,  
Filling our hearts with joy  
So that they withstand the cold;

Will we ever be this carefree again?  
So wrapped around with love,  
Our brimming plates laid down to us,  
No need to push and shove;

Our clothes, newly-washed and ironed  
Arranged for us to wear,  
Each day filled with laughter and play  
Fending off sorrow and care;

Each day spent thus, a paradise  
At leisure, no frenzied hurry,  
These days our youthful treasure  
To slake tomorrow's worry

Paul Gerard Reed

# Tree

Your leafy tresses shake annoyance  
That you cannot catch the wind,  
Rooted toes inveigle the crusted earth  
But have never sinned,  
Nor heard the clock ticking,  
Through the restless squall;

Steadfast and patient you stand  
As the mighty waves toss,  
As wars are waged, crosses borne  
As gravestones mildew and moss,  
Unseeing and undying,  
Whilst all around we fall.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Trees

I stand firm here  
Immovable  
Watch as life goes by  
And I have to let you go;

My feet are in the earth  
Immovable  
I can only sway in the winds  
As they sweep to and fro;

What is the meaning of eternity  
Uncountable  
As men make their mistakes  
I watch them come and go;

My arms find life each Spring  
Irresistible  
But I cannot wrap them around you  
I must let you go;

The earth spins and tilts  
Endlessly  
But I stand firm here  
And I must let you go.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Tribute To Roker Pier

The young ones do not know as yet  
Of the battles, the ships lost and wrecked,  
When your straight silhouette was besmirched  
Under high waterlines bedecked;

When you took the endless bitter nights  
And made the surging tides your slave,  
Borne Roker footsteps that echoed the past  
As you turned back each angry wave;

When you bent to follow the horizon line  
Standing solidly, proud and fast,  
Over-swept by the salted gales  
Absorbing the North Sea's blast;

When your stern stonework protected the pebbly beach  
Until it seemed you could stand no longer,  
When each failed battering only enhanced your pride  
With each lashing spume you grew stronger;

When your attention never split or wandered  
Between venomous spit and becalming slop,  
You guarded unceasingly the River Wear  
Carried the ghostly fishermen atop;

When we were saved by your sluggard walls  
From the mad and reckless storms rescued,  
The young ones only see your rugged veil  
And a frustrated sea, subdued.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Trow Quarry

The grass seemed reborn in it's green  
Having been warmed and defrosted  
By the midday sun and now in a scene  
That the ice no longer accosted

The eerie call of oystercatchers rang  
Round the gnarled and bleak quarry sides  
But only a fleeting gift to my ears  
Before drifting away with the tides

Oft times before my feet imprinted this grass  
With faithful dog and hopes set too high  
But time since fleeting in it's swift pass  
The dog in heaven and my hopes all awry

Strange, how the ghostly memories still hung  
As the North Sea lay remorseful and dull  
How yesteryear's dog barks still rung  
In the quarry's ethereal lull

I stood there briefly emboldened  
By the greatness of the space beyond  
My warm escaping breath fast coldened  
By the winter's chilling magical wand

The sky looked down, no longer brightened  
As the modest sun started to slip  
Below rooftops and the grass again whitened  
In frosty hands with their bejewelled grip

Paul Gerard Reed

# Twig

I cast away a twig of hope  
That noiselessly lands and floats serene  
Blind knot eyes upturned on the river's slope  
Admiring the peaceful scene;

You travel under arched bridges and towering trees  
Between juttied banks strewn with stones,  
Gently ruffled by the afternoon breeze  
Blending and swirling the brownish tones;

Where your journey ends I do not know  
But time matters not on your drift of grace,  
Down the river, out of sight from me you go  
To laugh silently at the human race.

Paul Gerard Reed

## Two Blackbirds

The two of them danced  
Not as a couple, but apart  
On the wet morning grass  
They would prance and dart

They listened, with heads cocked  
Until resuming their hopping beat  
Then acutely stopping again to listen  
To the worm castes beneath their feet

He black, her brown  
Inspecting the garden at random  
For fresh evidence to solve the crime  
Like Morse and Lewis in tandem

Sweet blackbirds, with unbridled hope  
My dreary morning re-born  
With your effervescent hunt  
For the spoils below the lawn

Paul Gerard Reed

# Tyne Valley Mist

The ground was slumbering  
Beneath your chilly wrapping  
Absorbing the sun's bounty  
Fiery energy sapping;

Obscuring sky and horizons  
Lying heavy in the vale  
Smothering the morning  
Cradling hill and dale;

An exact moment arrived  
With sufficient time spent  
Which lifted your gloomy shroud  
Made your clouded grasp relent;

And, like shy actors  
Becalmed in creative rage  
The submerged valleys glories  
Entered upon the stage;

We had not misplaced  
What sunny wavelengths yield  
Once again tree and green slope  
Are openly revealed;

The heights of the day  
Upon our fortunes riding  
Gave them back to us  
They were only hiding.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Tynemouth Longsands

Sea breezes sweeping faces  
The moon ascends the land  
Then descends in lamp-lit traces  
Shadowy memories hidden in the sand;

February's mantle briefly lifted  
From tough grass and dunes  
Watery sunlight carefully sifted  
Promising days of June;

An invisible trace  
An untraceable gleam  
A familiar face  
Fulfilling a dream.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Ullswater

Sun-warmed pebbles from the shore  
Caressed our tired feet  
As we walked along our secret way

Where views pierced the hanging boughs  
Of greened mountaintops,  
Foamy crests and spray;

People in the distance queued  
To pay for an hour of freedom  
To edge nearer to your charms

As sailing boats with yellow sails  
Danced and bobbed in joy  
In your sprawling arms;

We threw stones as wishes  
Along the laughing waves  
And then down to the depths beneath

To rest with the others  
Thrown long ago  
And whose memories we keep;

And as we stood in awe  
And tasted the breeze  
That eased our cares to release

The waters of the lake  
Subdued our fiery souls  
And granted us a kind of peace

Paul Gerard Reed

# Under The Verdant Canopy

Under the verdant canopy  
Of leaves dripping in the rain,  
Muted birdsong becalming  
Peace resting unrestrained;

An interlude between suns,  
Shadowy boughs for rooks' mating,  
An ethereal forested glade  
A feeling of waiting;

A safe place, a hidden nook  
Where no other feet tread,  
A vacuum beckoning silence  
For words that were never said.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Under Wearmouth Bridge

We stood between blackened stone columns  
Carrying history, high and proud  
The world racing frantically above us  
But down here, no longer loud;  
We were glad to have discovered  
A place we had never stood before  
Amongst these sturdy pillars  
Far beneath the traffic roar;  
A vow was made to return  
View the work of stonemason hand  
To sample again the green tranquillity  
Hidden below Sunderland.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Undo

Undo everything done to date in it's order  
Dig up 'Mrs Simkins' from her place in the border  
Unpaint the fence with each brush stroke undone  
The wood left parched under the rays of the sun

Unprotect all the honours so stoutly defended  
Unspend all the precious monies expended  
Unmake all the critical decisions made  
Replenish the wine glass with flat lemonade

Quench the fires that burned by and by  
Make drab the brightness of the morning sky  
Cheat the game played and rigid laws flout  
Unsing what your heart once poured out

But where would it get you, this undoing dream?  
Be left forlorn by the banks of the stream  
Unfulfilled by the sorrows absorbed  
And poorer forever in the eyes of the Lord

Paul Gerard Reed

# Upstairs Downstairs

So they gathered for a drinks evening in London West One  
The social elite eager to look on  
As Edward and Mrs Simpson were due to join the din  
They guests got a shock when the butler heralded in

None other than a high-ranking German to the 'hop'  
It was, of course, Joachim Von Ribbentrop  
In tow with said Mrs Simpson that night  
Not a sign of poor Edward, perhaps it was fright

At the thought of the dowsing to come  
For, in order to redeem her social aplomb  
The lady of the house ordered the waiter to be cute  
And 'accidentally' unload a tray of drinks over Von R's posh suit

The staged accident worked faultlessly, with the butler tripping  
Forcing Von Ribbentrop to leave with his coat tails dripping  
And everyone breathed a huge sigh of relief  
And sank their teeth once more into the corned beef

Paul Gerard Reed

# Vaping

Vaping is better than tobacco  
So we were told yesterday  
But now there is an alternative view  
Now its just as bad they say

But on reading beyond the headlines  
Which of course are there to grab our attention  
It appears the trials that they set up  
Deserve a bit more of a mention

For the effects on the aorta that they report  
Are from 5 minutes of tobacco they tell  
Then compared to the effect of vaping  
From fully a half hour's spell

Why pick such an extended vape  
To base their comparison on?  
Why not compare like-for-like sessions  
Has all common sense got up and gone?

If we restrict vaping times  
To the same as a cigarette burn  
Then I reckon it's six times more healthy  
That's the lesson I learn

But the scientists like to confuse us  
And change the rules at their ease  
So my message is to carry on vaping  
But stop after 5 minutes please!

Paul Gerard Reed

# Vapour Trail Sky

We gathered once more in the old place  
Under a vapour trail sky  
Memories dancing through our minds  
Of the days that have passed us by;

These are the Trow rocks of South Shields  
Standing stark and bare, cold and proud  
Drifting with time towards oblivion  
Hidden away from the crowd

The crumbled concrete standing ragged  
Where defences once braced against invader  
The tumbling and scarred rock faces  
With time and tide the degrader

Soft clumps of velvety grasses  
To bound over, clamber and climb  
A slice of the silver moon overlooking  
The hollows of mud and grime

An adventure, an escape, a secret place  
Set in bitter winds, far away from the world  
Where the dunes sit limp and exhausted  
Their fingers round timber barks curled

The gun emplacement implacable  
It's barrel pointing out to the sea  
Aiming at no-one in particular  
But thinking it defends you and me

Paul Gerard Reed

# Victorian Sunday

We walked on the same grass,  
Shaded under the same trees  
Breathed the same air;  
We talked excitedly,  
Shared the same hopes,  
Saw the same light everywhere;

They caught our eye,  
We heard their voice  
On tier, slope and hill;  
They, too, gathered by the bandstand,  
Stood patiently in the queue,  
Felt the same sea fret and chill;

Sampled ice cream,  
Drank reviving coffee,  
Felt the top of fence posts;  
Looked to the evening,  
Wanting to be safe,  
Walking amongst their ghosts;

Laid out new clothes,  
Polished shoes,  
Wore their Sunday 'best';  
Took bravely to promenade,  
Stared out to sea,  
Shy hid behind the rest;

Ran finger down stiff collar,  
Adjusted pleat,  
Smoothed crease and rumple;  
Took their place  
In our sepia prints  
As time saw them crumple;

Now you walk forever  
With nowhere to go  
In the empty park;  
Watch as we repeat

Your Sunday stroll  
'Till the light turns dark.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Wait

I have learned to be patient  
Though not a patient man  
I have learned to cherish the moment  
Breathe the air while I can;

Life is a series of days  
In which hopes accumulate  
The reward is not in it's coming,  
But that you had to wait

Paul Gerard Reed

# Wait For The Light

Now that the sun is low in the sky  
And another day has drifted on by  
The ticking of the clock will steadily confirm  
That this hour has gone and will never return.

For we are set forward in a headlong flight  
With no arms to raise or time-weapons to fight  
The force that moves clockwise the slender hands  
That have greyed the old and quelled the bands.

We must join in the race with the dusk to greet  
The departing rays as they slide to complete  
The end of the day and the start of the night  
And lay our heads down and wait for the light

Paul Gerard Reed

# We Are All The Same

Wherein lies the meaning of the world?  
In our hearts, minds or souls  
Or all three, or none?  
Are we just an extant species  
With random thoughts  
That add up to nought,  
Chasing around in circles,  
Dilly-dallying and dawdling  
When on the verge of the truth;  
We hesitate to say what we really believe  
For fear of offending someone else  
But dream of a brighter day  
For ourselves alone;  
We care about our future  
And that of our loved ones  
And pretend the rest,  
No matter how well practiced our frowns;  
Our footprints are soon smoothed over,  
Our history read and discarded,  
Our efforts in vain but for ourselves;  
And we are all the same.

Paul Gerard Reed

# We Are At Your Mercy

We are at your mercy  
For when the day is ended  
We have to hope  
The sun has not been offended  
And that you will return  
Be once again reborn  
To take us out of night  
Towards the next new dawn.

Paul Gerard Reed

# We Are Here Now

We are here now  
And can forget all our troubles in an instant  
If we could just throw them away  
Into another day;  
This frail path we walk along  
Where each moment can be a lifetime  
Or gone before we can even see it,  
Where love and life pass so swiftly by  
In the blink of an eye;  
But we are still here  
We have gone from young to old  
The advancing years beckoned  
And in a fraction of a second  
Swept us through;  
Pointless to measure  
Rather just treasure  
What we have now.

Paul Gerard Reed

# We Are The Last

We are the last of the children  
The ones who roamed in the breeze  
Felt the sunshine on our backs  
That dried our muddied knees;

Our mams would wait for us  
To come home late for tea,  
Knowing we wouldn't be back in time  
Knowing we were free;

And they worried  
But in a different way  
To the mams who worry  
About their kids today;

Sweet and mischievous  
Unhindered and wild  
Allowed to play and run  
Allowed to be a child;

Come with me fishing  
For tadpoles in the burn  
Come with me wishing,  
With so much to learn;

Yes, we are the last of the children  
Who didn't rush to grow  
The ones who tasted being young  
And didn't need to know.

Paul Gerard Reed

# We Can Swing Together (A Tribute To Alan Hull)

The reliving of musical glories  
Filled the air with forgotten ribald parties,  
Drunken times and inspiration,  
Bitterness and brilliance,  
Cynicism and pride;

We joined together in raucous celebration of times past,  
A generation or two had slipped by in the meantime  
Just like the Tyne had lazily dribbled  
But the young ones didn't know, notice or care  
As they sang and danced  
Twirling faux pirouettes and rocking hips;

The interim epochs were encapsulated  
Wrapped in North Eastern love  
And set free in bubbles of sound  
That drifted away overhead on mandolin strings,  
On no pre-destined route  
Other than the breeze had in mind.

Paul Gerard Reed

# We Got Through

Now that the blackbird greets the dawning  
And evenings have a twilight haze  
I think back to the depths of Winter  
And how we got through those days;

We kept our hopes alive with laughter  
With brave thoughts and daring to dream  
We thought of the freshness of the meadow  
And sunlight glinting on the stream;

We baked mince pies and Christmas cake  
We toasted the season with sherry  
We remembered the loved ones lost  
And determined to be merry;

We braced ourselves against cold mornings  
We put on two pairs of socks  
We rubbed our cold hands together  
Our scarves flapped like windsocks;

We visited outdoor winter fayres  
And tasted warming ales and cheeses  
We braved the severe winter gales  
And dreamt of Summer breezes;

We looked out through misty glasses  
And watched the frost sparkle and harden  
On the grassy tips with no daisies between  
And wished they would adorn the garden;

We gazed out at the cold black sky  
At the shimmering moon above  
And waited calmly for Spring to arrive  
With our hopes and dreams and love

Paul Gerard Reed

# We Laughed As One

We laughed as one, long and loud  
Against the sombreness of the day  
Dancing in the freshness all around on the hilltop,  
But the rushing of the air warned us  
Shivering limbs and shaking leaves,  
Some already succumbed and fallen;  
Purple thistle crowns waving magisterially  
Under tight clusters of orange berries,  
Store against winter's ills  
All telling us the summer had gone.  
In one final defiant collective display of joy  
We ran until our legs ached  
And breathed in lungfuls of the gusts  
That had come to take the season away.

Paul Gerard Reed

# We Were There That Day

People standing high on the cupola, unseen  
Under the blue skies of Florence  
Behind the alabaster screen  
Looking down on us  
As we made our nervous way;

The sun was warm on our backs  
But we had a train to catch  
And we couldn't stay;  
We could only slurp hastily  
At the offered cups of history and culture  
Scattered through the streets,  
Our mark only transient footsteps  
In submerging sand;

Our little band of adventurers  
Not chic,  
Not sophisticated,  
But not weak  
And dedicated to one another;

The Ponte Vecchio bore our weight  
And along narrow footways we edged  
The setting almost too great  
To take in;  
The swift afternoon hours our only possession  
Which quickly slipped away  
But we were there that day

Paul Gerard Reed

# We Will Go On Forever

No-one can deny us now  
We have finally found our way  
We've learned, we know how  
As surely as we stand together today;

For you are me  
And I am you  
The leaf on the tree  
Under the sky of blue;

For we exist as one  
No thought ever truer  
On this earth we live upon  
Through us you endure;

We have beaten life's test  
Something it cannot sever  
We are the very best  
We will go on forever.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Weather Forecast

The sun shines  
But then the wind blows  
Bringing the clouds  
And then it snows

Breezes ruffle the hedge  
But guess what then?  
They turn nasty  
Becoming gale force ten

Paul Gerard Reed

# Welcome Back

With blinding glare the sun re-emerges  
Where has it hidden amongst the dirges?  
Streaming through grey veils of gloom  
Bringing the darkness to it's doom

Some other planet it must have warmed  
Whilst round the candles our mankind swarmed  
Some other heart it must have lifted  
Whilst we through brighter memories sifted

So welcome back our fiery neighbour  
No longer through the night we labour  
Stoke up the earth's boilers once again  
Remove the blot of the black sky's stain

Paul Gerard Reed

# What Became Of The Day

Now that the sun has shone  
And burned itself inside out  
Now that you have left me all alone  
With just myself to doubt  
The day that has just left me  
Seems an eternity away  
A different age when we ran  
And lost ourselves in the play  
What can have become  
Of the bright and hopeful morn  
What persuaded the evening  
To steal away the dawn?

Paul Gerard Reed

# What Do We Know?

We think we know what makes the grass grow  
We think we know what makes day and night  
And what creates the sunlight

But then we find out a little bit more  
Which disproves what we thought we knew before  
So really we are wide of the mark  
We're just groping around in the dark

So the next time you hear about warming of the globe  
And to compensate you start to disrobe  
Remember that temperature isn't necessarily subject to inflation  
Because now they think the sun's gone into hibernation

Paul Gerard Reed

# What If

What if it all came to nought  
And there was no silvery tomorrow  
What if the future could not be bought  
And everything ended in sorrow

What if all the binds and ties meant little  
As if we never held hands at all  
What if all we thought solid was brittle  
When we have to answer the call

What if there was no hope or laughter  
As if no tears had ever been cried  
What if there was nothing to follow after  
And it had all been a meaningless ride

What if it was all just a magic delusion  
With life a trick of the light  
What if all that existed was confusion  
And a dreary never ending night

But ask me to give up my vision  
And place optimism on sale or return  
That would be asking me to give up my spirit  
Which still so fiercely burns

So whether or not there is another day  
On which my hopes are pinning  
What matters is thinking that I'll find a way  
And view the end as just the beginning

Paul Gerard Reed

# What Price Our Memories

When the fresh morning air  
Blew over the south bay  
When the crystal bright sunlight  
Beckoned the start of the day  
What would the world have thought  
Had we not been there to see  
The lapping of the waves  
And the rustling of the trees?  
If our footsteps had not traversed  
The streets of the old town  
If the rain had not fallen and fallen  
On its way down to the ground  
What if our spirits  
Had not had the chance to bond  
What price our golden memories  
In the waiting years beyond

Paul Gerard Reed

# When

When spirits are all together  
As in a team  
When thoughts and prayers jostle  
As in a dream  
Hope and happiness ignite  
A fireball of love  
And peace descends on us  
From the heights above

Paul Gerard Reed

# When Did You First Tie Your Own Laces?

When did you first learn to tie your own laces?  
Were you eight or nine years old?  
When did you first start to wear braces?  
For the purpose your trousers to uphold;

What a struggle it used to be  
Putting on your own vest  
It used to take an eternity  
And then you needed a rest;

Remember when you never washed your face  
And it used to get covered in grime  
Chocolate would be smeared all over the place  
We used to have a great time;

Someone else would comb our hair  
And take time to put in a neat parting  
About tidy appearance we just didn't care  
Our lives were only just starting;

When did we first learn to blow our nose?  
Instead of letting it run and bubble  
When did we first adopt a self-conscious pose?  
Why do we bother to take the trouble?

Paul Gerard Reed

# When I Look Back

When I look back on the olden days  
Albeit seen through a rose blossom haze  
It occurs to me that it's a shame because  
We didn't realise how great it was

At the time all the troubles and woe  
Overshadowed the warmth and the glow  
Of those days on a reliable track  
But you only see this when you look back

Now in these days of turmoil and change  
It's seems very hard to rearrange  
Emotions into an orderly state  
For thinking back to the days that were great

Paul Gerard Reed

# When I Retire

When I retire  
(if I ever get there)  
I will run round in circles  
Jump up and down in the air;  
I will do handsprings  
And a crazy loop-de-loop  
Sing at the top of my voice  
Let my inhibitions droop;  
Turn cartwheels and climb trees  
Dance merrily down the street  
Attract the attention of the crowd  
Forget about being discreet;  
Behave ostentatiously  
Wear silly clothes and look flash  
No longer melt in the crowd  
Act outrageously and rash;  
Do all the things I didn't do  
No longer the issue shirk;  
Take hold of my own life  
And stop going to work

Paul Gerard Reed

# When Night Lays Down

When night lays down her heavy veil  
And shadows conspire in the park  
The starry constellations blaze their trail  
Open blinds let in the dark;

The moonlight ripples on the pool  
Trickling silence as she ascends  
Cinders now lie black and cool  
Among charred and black beam ends;

But at the coming of the dawn  
New hopes the soul ingrain  
The moon from the sky is torn  
And the fire is lit again.

Paul Gerard Reed

# When Pennies Were Kisses

If I become a rich man tomorrow  
I hope I will not forget today  
When we confounded sorrow  
And drove our troubles away;

When the precious currency was love  
When pride allowed our hearts to sing  
When pennies were kisses that rained from above  
When we had nothing but everything.

Paul Gerard Reed

# When The Fun Ends

A question that has been troubling me  
And I'm sorry to be so blunt  
But at what age do you realise  
That you've got your vest on back-to-front?

At a young age we seem blissfully unaware  
Of the vanity in the 'grown up' human race  
Like the fact you're wearing odd socks  
Or that chocolate smears your face

We used to come home with grubby trousers  
All dusty from the cinder track  
We forgot to bring home our glasses  
And our hair was sticking up at the back

Do we suddenly hit an age of realisation  
When carefree things to the winds are tossed;  
Maybe that's when all the fun ends  
And when our innocence is lost

Paul Gerard Reed

# When Was It We Shared That Dream?

When was it we shared that dream?  
When all about us was what it seemed,  
When the days were so sweet and dear  
When the long nights held no fear;

Every day the invaders arrive  
To make sure that nothing can thrive  
No seeds sown that might germinate  
Oversee the shouldering of their weight;

Every second they pry and survey  
To choke the beginning of a settled way  
To drive away calm that might infest  
Their care-strewn, cruel and agonising test;

When was it that we shared that dream?  
When hopes coursed through our bloodstream  
When all was in reach of our arms outstretched  
When the future was just being sketched.

Paul Gerard Reed

# When We Awake

Oh, mirror in the sky  
What is love?  
Can the child within my heart rise above?  
Can I sail through the changin' ocean tides?  
Can I handle the seasons of my life?  
From 'Landslide' by Stevie Nicks of Fleetwood Mac, 1975.

We sat at the water's edge in silence  
Watched the surface ruffled by the breeze  
And for a moment, there was nothing,  
Nothing but the past and what the future sees;

This whole life has been but a dream  
One fallen into gently from above  
And one we must slip out of  
When we awake from love.

Paul Gerard Reed

# When You Grow Older

When you grow older  
The world will not be the same  
The rules become more rigid  
Of what seemed an easy game;

The details start to blur  
Of the places you have been  
The laughter not so free  
The sunny days unseen;

Lost the little hiding places  
Lost the secret den  
Lost the precious innocence  
When the 'now' becomes the 'then';

Instead we feign our happiness  
And devious plots contrive  
We compete man against man  
In order to survive;

We stumble around in the dark  
Ever searching for the truth  
When the answer is right in front of us  
In those happy days of youth.

Paul Gerard Reed

# When You Wave Goodbye

When you wave goodbye  
I take a sigh  
Our love unsaid,  
To see you standing there  
Without a care  
All those years ahead;

You are growing day by day  
In your own way  
In your eyes a different light,  
But it's best to stay a boy  
To keep that joy  
Stave off the night;

As the ages advance  
With time the lance  
Days on the calendar crossed,  
Moss grows on the stone  
Old people all alone  
Waves on the shore are tossed;

So stay with me  
Let time be  
And hold my hand,  
Keep that joy  
Of being a boy  
As rocks turn to sand.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Where Would I Be?

Where would I be without you?  
I would be where strength is never found  
Where the reassurance of love is lost  
Where ships have run aground;

Where would I be without you?  
I would be where hope cannot sustain  
Where all endeavour is futile  
Where the clouds are full of rain;

Where living is an empty care  
Where hands were never held  
Where peace is lost to war  
Where dishonour was compelled;

Where the morning light never spills  
Where promises are never true  
Where nothing worthwhile is worth having,  
Nothing without you.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Who Invented The Dot?

Who invented the dot?  
That is, the dot in 'dot com'  
For now there are dots everywhere  
Where did they all come from?

The fella who invented the dot  
Must now be a billionaire  
Wallowing in a sea of his own dots  
With cash floating in the air

I wish I'd invented the dot  
And sold them at a penny a time  
I'd now be a few quid richer  
Without resorting to crime

The next big invention  
Could be a new type of comma  
Maybe a comma but with wings  
A bit like a Lancaster bomber

That leads me to another question  
The difference between a dot and a full stop  
This is a particular query  
That I'm not prepared to drop

If there is anyone out there  
Who could answer this question with ease  
Please get in touch as soon as possible  
Answers on a postcard please

Paul Gerard Reed

# Wide Open Skies

I need to fill up my mind  
With wide open skies  
And stretching blue seas,  
To unshackle the binds  
To bathe my eyes  
To set myself free;

And so I watch the tides  
Hear the waves' rush  
Stand on the lonely shore,  
Till the high sun slides  
Till the sea birds hush  
And then the day is no more.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Windermere

We leaned on the brass and oak railings  
And watched as the water churned  
Billowing green candy-floss clouds  
As the propeller turned;  
Watched as a million tiny starlets  
On tops of ripples flashed  
Dispersed to heaven and back  
As the propeller thrashed;  
Edging closer to the landing platform  
We looked back at our wended way  
Past islets clumped with green  
Past each inlet and bay;  
Took in the greatness of the lake  
The rugged mountains and peaked backcloth  
But now it was time for leaving  
Our memories scattered amongst the froth

Paul Gerard Reed

# Winter

Winter, you have lain on my garden  
Clumped soil and split frame,  
Made soft landing place harden  
Frosted glass and played icy game;

Made the branch leafless and bare  
Stolen the evening gleam,  
Stabbed lung with embittered air  
Picked at the threads of summer dreams;

What divine call do you ever hear?  
What goads you to enter the fold?  
Do you stand over green meadows and leer?  
Relishing that the blood will run cold?

Do you live in a cavern dark  
With no thrill or glow to befriend  
With light just a solitary spark  
For the sunny day to end

Paul Gerard Reed

## Wise Words

What wise words we utter from our lips  
Only to ignore them ourselves  
What guidance we give to drifting ships  
To run aground on rocky shelves

Wisdom is dispersed with generous intent  
Amongst our sisters and brothers  
But no matter how kindly sent  
It is only meant for others

Paul Gerard Reed

# Wish The Day Away

The fingers of the clock  
Would not move around the face  
Time seemed to be endless  
As we gazed out into space

The rain fell without interval  
Interminable it seemed that day  
But when eventually the night fell  
We wished we hadn't wished the day away

Because it wasn't until afterwards  
When you look back the day to rate  
That we realised we were struggling through  
A day that was truly great

How often does that feeling come upon you  
And wrap it's futile hands upon  
The aching that you want something back  
Only too late because it's gone

Paul Gerard Reed

# Wogan's Answer

Wogan was asked by the Pastor  
If he believed or not  
He had to answer in the negative  
Though his collar got a little hot

Due to a a certain discomfort  
On being asked such a direct thing  
It made him stop and think about  
The lucky life he'd been living

To what did he attribute  
This wonderful life so great?  
He paused for a moment then replied  
That it was purely down to fate

The Pastor persisted with his questioning  
And asked what would Wogan say  
To St Peter at the Gates  
On the judgement day

Wogan cast his eyes heavenward  
And jutted out his chin,  
And in an apologetic voice whispered  
'Can I still come in? '

Paul Gerard Reed

# Woodhorn

No longer the tread of pit boots  
Helmets left on the rack  
A grey gloomy sky surmounts all  
They won't be coming back

No longer the sinking of shafts  
To find earth's flinty black crease  
A pit wheel stilled and silent  
Now just a museum piece

Gone the men who braved the dark  
Gone, the pit ponies all set free  
Gone the hacking of the face  
Gone the bait box and pigeon cree

Now we trudge in this new world  
With power shower instead of tin bath  
But still we can feel the atmosphere  
Still feel the aftermath

Now just a black and white photograph  
The man who scraped the blackened crust  
Who spent his days below the surface  
Fought for his future amongst the dust

Goodbye the sons of mining fathers  
And those that were there the last  
Goodbye to Woodhorn's doughty soldiers  
Goodbye to our mining past

Paul Gerard Reed

# Woodstock

Adolescence and freedom  
Hopes, fear and rebellion  
Intertwined down the twisting rope of time;  
All the same, all expended  
All drifted away on the same air  
That the solemn church bells chime;

A scorching heat, a thunderstorm  
Skies crowded with bonded roar,  
A star spangled banner to wave;  
All gone, all lost forever  
All just as unattainable  
As all the other things we crave.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Words For Autumn

Spy the coming winter, our overlord,  
Brewing up his glorious discord  
Of frosted edges and numbing toes  
Stood limply next to the bloomless rose;

For low suns are burning the blinds,  
Scorching holes in our shadowed minds,  
Leaves no longer a strident green,  
Haloed in a golden sheen;

And, like our hopes, falling to the ground  
Under autumn's wings, without a sound,  
Or is that just memories gathered there?  
Under the trees, so stark and bare;

Out of tune with summer's mellow chime,  
Our roots must stand the test of time,  
Persist and develop out of sight,  
Keep on growing through the night;

Bring us the harshness of the seasons,  
For a thousand different reasons,  
We are alive and feel the sun  
And there is so much more still to be done.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Written To A Dog

We own the earth  
The hills and the fields  
The crops are ours alone  
All that the land yields;

We are rulers of the globe  
You are granted our permission  
When to be wild and free  
It is not your decision;

The beaches are ours to enjoy alone  
They are there for man's pleasure  
Not for the sea birds that wheel overhead  
Or the nests that hold their treasure;

We give you a taste of fresh air  
But you are never truly freed  
Even on your walks with us  
You have to stay on the lead;

Everything must be just right for us  
We are rulers, you have no free will  
We say when you can enjoy the space  
(In the months between October and April) .

Paul Gerard Reed

# Years

The years pile up  
Like leaves at my door  
Memories on memories,  
And, like them, they drift  
Through my mind.

To let go of the past  
Is so hard,  
So tempting to cling  
Onto things no longer there  
Like grasping at the breeze;

What was it all for?  
Those days past and gone  
Do they add up to nothing  
Like the leaves  
That lie at my door.

Paul Gerard Reed

# You

I know you very well,  
Better than you know yourself,  
For I have come to realise  
My imprint,  
My self in you;

For all that it is  
That I have in me,  
Whatever it amounts to,  
Useless, or not,  
Has been given to you;

All of my heart  
That beats in me  
So loudly,  
That no-one else hears,  
You hear;

My fears and misgivings,  
Mistakes and errors,  
Will surely recur,  
Wrong ways taken  
You will take;

But their darkness will be lit  
With hope,  
Protection offered,  
By my home-loving  
Which is etched in your soul;

Solitude and shyness  
Will haunt and hamper,  
Will be a river to cross,  
But you will get there  
Like me;

You will find in yourself  
An inner core,  
Stronger than could have been guessed

Waiting at the heart,  
The very centre of you;

Great moments of joy  
Peaks and highs  
On the special days,  
Worth more than any gold  
These too are yours;

Be better than me  
Set a higher bar,  
A nobler standard,  
For you can truly surpass  
What has gone before;

And in my sleep,  
My resting somewhere else,  
I will stir,  
Gently touch you  
And say that I love you.

Paul Gerard Reed

# You (My World)

With not the slightest effort  
That no-one detected, or turned to note  
You brought love into my world  
To loneliness, the antidote  
And with your heart, devote;

With no practiced smile  
You lit up the darkest room  
You brought light into my world  
Dispelled the gloom,  
Made the roses bloom;

With no false premise  
You spoke words that were true  
You brought truth into my world  
No other meaning construe  
Encouraged trust to accrue;

And now, with my tired eyes  
I see through the rain  
You brought hope back to my world  
Soothed the pain  
Let me live again.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Young Queen

Surrounded by prancing Whig and Tory  
(Some of whom thought they were witty)  
We are being told young Victoria's story  
But did she really look that pretty?

Queen V. is dependent upon 'Lord M.'  
For guidance and general advice  
Which he dispenses with great acumen  
But despite having repeated it twice

Vic elects to completely ignore  
And sets out her own chosen stall  
Discarding the words of one who's been there before  
Got the T-shirt and seen it all;

The inevitable outcome of such youthful vigour  
Through not electing the right way to go  
Not testing one's thoughts first with rigour  
'Sorry, Vicky, but I told you so'.

Paul Gerard Reed

# Your Time Is Yet To Come

In a sudden moment  
A calmness descends  
And the war with Winter is assuaged,  
The waves cease to crash  
A truce with despair is struck  
On the fields where the battle raged;

We taste the scented freshness  
Our feet run on the warming grass  
Amongst peeping buttercup and clover,  
Once our children ran alongside us  
Now our grandchildren bound away  
There is a feeling of handing over;

Your time is yet to come  
Across all seasons and wars  
The treasure is locked away still,  
The magnificence not yet dawned  
Your life to flourish and blossom  
Like the budding daffodil.

Paul Gerard Reed