

Poetry Series

**e Redwood
- poems -**

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e Redwood(6th February,1947)

I grew up in Rhodesia but left when Mugabe came into power. I have loved poetry and lyrics all my life. I now live on my brother's game reserve in Northern Natal.

Black Independence (1972)

His proud shoulders stooped and aching head bent,
The man looked at the earth beneath his feet.
Blood, sweat, tears and long years on this land were spent.
Man alive! No man won land without pain.

His beloved wife lay here at eternal rest.
On this very land they had met and wed.
They faced their hard life together with zest;
Life was cruel and the price they paid, high.

The lush land before him was proudly his own
No man could have achieved more in his life.
This was his pride, his joy and his only home,
He knelt there on the dry red earth and cried.

His servant of many years watched in sorrow,
He knew the thoughts that tortured his master.
What would become of his great land tomorrow,
And Oh God! Why could a man not just die?

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Border War

Rhodesia December 1973

No glory here and not patriotism,
just the lifeless body of a friend
whose bloody clothes are his only protection
from the deep humility of death.

Soldiers look at each other, eyes dark with pain.
They can't understand, he was so young!

No medals here and not bloody tradition,
this is war, just as war truly is
stripped of its uniform and glory
just pain and death and sheer wastefulness!

When the war is over, will they have achieved
enough to make his death worthwhile?

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Growing Up

What does the laughing child
know of growing up;
the pain of first love
rejected?
The heartache of losing
a loved one
and learning to live with emptiness?
Finding money to meet the bills
and worrying about the situation
politically?
Not knowing the cure for the ills
of a very sick world,
corrupt with power and hate;
yet trying to make it a place
for your children to live
and you to die?

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Heartache Forever (Dedicated To Jaryd Stapleton - 12.03.07)

I lost a special friend today
It was grey and looked like rain,
But no rain fell -
Although we needed it like hell,
Not as much as I need my friend!
He was just nineteen,
So intelligent, so talented, so special!
It was so easy to love him
And so hard to let him go!
But he has gone anyway
So much still to say and do!
The desperately needed rains?
Well, they never passed this way at all
They have gone without leaving their trace of green
He has gone leaving a hundred hearts empty
And full of pain!

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In Remembrance

Thoughts, oh these obsessive thoughts
begone from my brain!
Let this churning, whirling end,
So night, take away the pain,
no longer trapped by desire
and burning guilt.
Let my mind rest in blackness,
Darkness beyond life!
Release the chains that bind fast
take sorrow away!

Oh night, no balm for conscience,
cease to be so dark!
Always man must live and die
and night become day.
Blood of the living must wax cold
and anguish must end?
Yet when death took my own love
heartache came to stay.
You, loving arms of the sad
fold gently around me,
let the peace that comes with loving
calmly flow oe'r me,
as you close your death doors
on complexities!

Heart of my heart, lost to me,
I cannot hold you,
and while my longing arms ache
to touch you again,
I close my eyes and I see
emptiness once more!
Your were my life and my hopes,
my dreams were all of you!
Now crushed and trampled I see
them strewn at my feet!
The tears that flow from my eyes
fall warm on my breast
and with them my blood wanes cold

and life starts to fade
while death's black oblivion
opens to receive!

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Life's Way

Tiresome and cold the road has become
This road to nowhere I'm travelling on.
My feet are weary, my brain is numb
Life is naught but a tragic con!

Born in anguish, we die in sorrow,
Between we stumble meaningless miles
Searching for a brighter tomorrow
In youthful love and kitten smiles.

Losing our lov'd ones along the way
We try to understand God's great plan,
But nothing can our heartaches alay,
For each smile, a thousand tears for man!

Gazing upon a golden sunset
You see the black rolling in behind,
Happiness and sorrow there have met,
All you men who cherish hope are blind!

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Old Man

Gnarled hands, shaking, grip the worn stick
Groping the way for blind eyes,
This man knows nothing but his pain
And his sorrow for lost friends!

He finds a bench in the cool shade
And there rests his aching legs,
Tears trickle from his sightless eyes
For the young people who die.

Time goes marching by so slowly
Meaning in his life has gone
And yet still he grips its slender thread
Not understanding why.

He has lived three score years and ten
The time allotted us all,
And then he has lived still ten more
He is so very tired now.

The sun sets darkly in the west
But his blind eyes do not see.
There he sits a lonely figure
Waiting out the beat of time!

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She's Only Three Years Old?

Tiny hands grasping tightly to the fence
Lost forlorn brown eyes staring,
A pathetic figure torn by life
And she's only three years old.

In the distance a young nanny stands
Talking to her friends.
No time, no love for this frail child
And she's only three years old.

Mother left this morning in a rush,
She was late, never said goodbye -
Daddy went away a year ago,
And she's only three years old.

A sparkling tear trickles down her cheek,
And splashes on her bare feet,
There's a little ache in her heart
And she's only three years old.

Tonight Mother will be going out,
A cocktail party or the cinema,
A little soul alone and forgotten
And she's only three years old.

Rain starts to patter down
Still she is there, getting soaking wet,
The tears and rain blending in sadness,
And she's only three years old

No laughter in her young heart
She is hungry but they've forgotten.
She shivers in the cold
And she's only three years old.

A kindly word, an affectionate kiss,
Goodnight! Goodbye! and a little time,
But how can she tell them?
She's only three years old.

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Suicide

There is no hope for tomorrow
the pain inside will not leave me,
and I'm drowning in my sorrow
that the world outside will not see!

My eyes have no more tears to cry,
I cannot bear another day
in this world that can only lie
and race along its thoughtless way!

When I am dead it will say of me
the man had no courage at all!
He was a coward don't you see!
Oh why can no-one hear my call?

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The Drunk

Dejected, outcast and despised
He sits on the sidewalk
Surveying the world that was his
But cannot be again.

His eyes are glassy pools of fear
He knows what fate is his.
The trembling hands can't wipe the tears
That trickle down his face.

People walk by and glance at him,
Another social wreck
To be scorned and pushed aside
Lest he contaminate!

So lonely in his twilight world
Where no-one understands
He tries to smile but fails somehow,
The pain inside strangles.

Won't someone stop and lend a hand
To this pathetic soul
Who lost his reason for trying
Somewhere along the way.

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Wages Of Sin

Death, end of all beginning
Why took you him?
Death, wages of my sinning,
Why such a price?

When the sunset ends the day
With endless night,
Interminable time pray
Let me wake free!

The harsh burden of sorrow,
Deep in my heart,
Will not leave me tomorrow
Nor forever!

My sins you paid for with pain,
And your own life -
Life's plan was not made in vain,
For now I pay!

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What Is Victory?

Hungry hearts remember loves lost in battle
While parents despair over bodies
That once were their sons so abundant with life,
And wonder why they should die!

What do these broken, bleeding bodies prove?
Were these men brave or just loyal?
Do soldiers know or even care why they fight?
Are they murderers, or only men
Fighting for what they truly believe is right?

How fruitless is all the fighting and bloodshed,
Why can man not live in harmony?
Can we know that young children die in anguish
And not weep for man's cruelty?

Why do we destroy what Nature has made wondrous
All the beauty that surrounds us?
Fill it with blood, tears, death, sorrow and despair,
Until the horror of man disgusts
And revolts all those who look upon his face!

Do we just close our eyes so we cannot see
Babies dying of starvation,
Young men who will have to face life without limbs,
And people lost and heartbroken?

Is it possible we think the wounds will mend,
Or is it just that we are callous?
How can a man, knowing death's reality
Call a war 'for man's benefit'?
How can he think victory is important?

Victory, the treasure of evil men's hearts,
How can they think you are precious,
Tell me you men who institute battle
What is this thing called Victory?

I will tell you that when the war is over,

And the broken soldiers come home,
The victorious nation will raise their flag
Watched by the tear-filled tragic eyes
Of men amidst the ruins that are their Victory!

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