

Poetry Series

Tom Billsborough
- poems -

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Tom Billsborough()

(senryu Series) Just One More 7 (Gleanings From The Cutting Room Floor)

Addendum of Rocks And Minerals (Senryu Series) - Poem by Kelly Kurt

Amber kelly

Fossil tree resin
Rubbing gives negative charge
My blonde haired daughter

Amber wes

Orange tone colour
... Gris spat up by the sperm whales
Forever... is book

Amber tom
Just an old fossil
Our ROSE is singing model
Orange tree resin

Opal kelly

Iridescent gem
Hydrated silica form
October birthstone

Opal wes

Lapo spelt backwards
not 'other people all lie'
.... O' mine I miss you

Opal tom
Australia's Gem
Creamy white in Idaho

O'Wes, you're a real....

Coal kelly

Combustible stone
Environmental menace
Santa's punishment

Coal wes

Newcastle cargo
No longer burnt in Brit homes
....liance is group formed

Coal Tom
Mixed up fizzy drink
Your New Year greeting by hand
Old King... quite merry!

Ruby kelly

Nine on the Mohs scale
One of the four precious stones
Oz slipper color

Ruby wes

Wife of Al Jolson
....con is river Caesar crossed
Took her love to town

Ruby tom
Programming language
Pigeon blood - greatest value
The Kaiser Chiefs' song

Zircon kelly

Diamond substitute
Oldest minerals on Earth
Radioactive

Zircon wes

Orcniz anagram
Big flashy ring grandma wore
Nocriz in mirror

Zircon tom
Green much sought after
Another find down Under
Zi corn? Did you say?

Granite kelly

Continental crust
Durable countertop rock
Used for curling stones

Granite wes

Force to live with old lady
Street that we used to live on
Things are taken for...

Granite tom
Tearing it around
Aberdeen is made of it
Two handles. Lost stones!

Marble kelly

Metamorphic stone
Mark of an excellent steak
Sculptor's medium

Marble wes

Object of child's game
What we sometimes think we lose

Arch in London town

Marble tom
Carrara quarries
Arch once hang-out in London
It's Pink in Georgia

Limestone kelly

Sedimentary
Ancient marine skeletons
Not a citrus fruit

Limestone wes

Difficult to pit
Of less value than rhinestone
Marking Harry's grave

Limestone tom
I'll bone up on that.
Underground caverns, close by.
Get that theme, young Wes.

Tom Billsborough

2. That Which Is

If you are water do not expect to resemble rocks.
If you are rock, do not attempt to flow.
The soft tongue does not imitate the teeth.
Hard teeth do not imitate the tongue.
Between tongue and teeth there is food.
Between night and day, the dawn.
Neither the past nor the future is the now.
Between the rational and intuitive, opens the miracle.
Matter is beauty, the immaterial is truth.
When Eternity gives birth to petals of light in clocks,
Tongues pierced by birds made of air,
Hands that pour honey and cloud-scented songs,
In the subsoil of the mind there shall appear a sink
Through which your thieving memory will drain itself.

Tom Billsborough

A Black Cat In A Cellar At Midnight

A black cat
In a cellar at Midnight.
At first sight a failed photo
Swimming in a dish of hypo
With nowhere to go,
Sadly looking blank!
Yet we stuck it in an album
With that fancy title
Awarding it an undeserving fame.
One thinks of those celebrities
Who had their brief day
But now in memory decay.
Their names we have to guess
When their photos come and go
In the fleeting fame of a Game Show.
As Francois Villon asked...
Where are the snows of yesteryear?
In Time's corroding Albums,
Faded monuments to Fame.

Tom Billsborough

A Brief History Of Swimsuits

Eve's, I believe.
Adam's mmmm.
A cantilever problem,
Up front, that is.
Fig leaves for swimsuits in Genesis.
Later cotton was in favour
But sagged in water,
Courting disaster
Gravity taking over,
Leading to a baring of souls
And a mad scramble for towels.
Which also were handy,
If extremely sandy,
And inclined to unravel
And reveal all.
Or what little, as I recall,
After immersion in freezing water.
Maybe fig leaves were the answer,
After all.
An old fashion made new
With a dab here and there of superglue.

Tom Billsborough

A Brief Question Of Time

The hands revolve but Time is mere illusion,
That old traditional God of hope and fear,
Imposing patterns for our behaviour,
Our constant shadow.

And yet the Now and our immediate soul
Is where religion flows within ourselves.
Our growth and that of every atom
In the Universe, create the true eternal.

Tom Billsborough

A Childhood Dream

Descend the spiral staircase
To a stone-flagged floor
And once again confront
That green door
Of my childhood dreams.
I shivered slightly
As the room was damp
But had no sense of fear.
A pale light issued
From a single lamp
As I stood rooted there
What did it mean?
The door was locked.
There was no key
Only a voice informing me
That I in verse must forge
A song to open up the mystery.
A code with exact words
In exact combination.
I have a strange sensation
That it concerned my consciousness,
And the instigator of being.

Tom Billsborough

A Desperate Situation

Oh dear what shall become
Of Two Fat ladies stuck in the John.
They shout and they shout
But there's no-one to hear
At least they have facilities near.

Tom Billsborough

A Ghost Story

Stone columns heave under the weight of Time,
The door hangs slackly as indifference.
The baronial hall an unwelcoming
Spectre of dust and silence.
As she treads slowly into that chamber of horror.
Suddenly a rustling of shadows as the rodent Lords
Recall vague memories of danger.
The staircase now unfolds from the floor above
And step by step she's growing cold
With the gradual onset of terror.
A piercing scream, a drum-roll of the breaking bones,
An icy breeze pervades the room
And then resumption of the spectral silence.
Did Amy fall or was propelled to doom.
The mystery remains as in a broken dream.

Tom Billsborough

A Hive Of Bees

Bri, Billie Bunny bred Barbara Bunny. Barbara blinked, bounced brightly, became beautiful. Boyfriend Ben bought Barabara beneficial blessings, birthday bargains: Black boots, bananas, brioches, bedspreads. Boris brought blunderbuss. Bang! Bang!
Bye, bye, Bunnies.

Tom Billsborough

A Lady Makes Magic

She leans on a wall,
Which is completely green.
Her mouth is open
And she recites a sweet verse.
And when I approach her
She touches She a stone in the wall
And a door now magically appears.
She beckons me in and at once
I am dazed and seduced
By so many an exotic perfume.
She smiles and she sings
As she dances like a ballerina,
A dance quite sublime,
Along a pale path that leads through the trees.
In a state of stupor I follow
And we come to a hollow
Where elves in green bonnets
Sit on their red toadstools
And the fairies are dancing in circles,
Singing sweet melodies
While the pink blossoms
Flutter down from the tall almond trees.
I stay there a while
In that enchanted clearing
Until it is time to leave.

"Can I return? " I ask her.
"Ah, yes, my dear, " she smiles.
"But how shall I find you? " I ask.
"Oh, you cannot find me
But I can always find you
As long as you have faith
That what you have seen is true.

Tom Billsborough

A Little Sea Shanty

Fresh blows the gale towards my home.
Timbers creak beneath the storm.
Sails fill out like bellied girls
The measure of our joy unfurls.
Oh, Come ye soon, my Plymouth roads.

Our vessel's laden to the Gills
With baccy from Virginia's fields
From bonny Norfolk we have come,
From bonny lasses we have known.
Oh, Come ye soon, my Plymouth roads.

Our loved ones wait our safe return,
So steady, helmsman at the stern.
We'll haul upon the sheets in rhyme
To catch the Wester breeze in time.
Oh, Come ye soon, my Plymouth roads.

The huer soon will sound his horn
and all the folks in Plymouth town
Will crowd upon the inner quay.
One there is who waits for me.
Oh, Come ye soon, my Plymouth roads.

A comely lass of Devon stock
She'll don her nicest Sunday frock.
The Norfolk lass is just as fair.
But this one's here. The other's there.
Oh, Come ye soon, my Plymouth roads.

Tom Billsborough

A Sad Sad Story

i hear the sound of ghostly feet
plodding down the town's main street.
Hush! Hush! I cry as it draws near
And we all shiver in great fear.
Then it's squelch squelch squelch
And an awesome belch
And a strangulated curse
But not, I think, in verse,
As the feet hit cloying mud.
Things aint too good
As I exclaim
Poor Poey Munter's stuck again.

Tom Billsborough

A Sending Off

Adam said little. Eve a lot
But it was Sam the snake who won the pot.
'Oi, Eve, ' he cried: 'A treat for thee',
Pointing his tail at the Apple tree.
'Oh, no, ' called Eve, that is forbidden.
All of knowledge there is hidden.
God insists we must not swallow
Those gorgeous apples, sparkling yellow! '
'No doubt it's good to stay so chaste,
But aren't you curious about the taste? '
She was and soon she took a bite
And Adam yielded without a fight,
Munching into misery. It hit them hard
When God brought out his two red cards.
'Get thee hence beyond these borders.'
You've disobeyed my solemn orders! '
And just for you, the temptress Eve,
I've something nasty up my sleeve! '
I guess if girls had told the tale,
The guilty party would be male.

Tom Billsborough

A Song Subsides

Our sounds uniquely
Are combined within the cortex
Of our minds.
Our songs.
How long
Will they withstand
The cold critique of time?
Brief fame for some ensues
Spectacular and new,
As some new Island formed
By great volcanic force,
Whilst others are divorced
By similar explosions
And now subside
Beneath relentless tides
Which pound them into dust.
How long before our songs
Will meet destruction
As language, fashion,
Slowly form a crust?

Tom Billsborough

A Sudden Flight

Elle montait a la cime du col
Ou elle ouvrait son grand parasol
Le vent devenait fort
Elle s'envolait tout alors
Son premier et son dernier vol.

Tom Billsborough

A Very Cruel Response

Responding to your note, my dear,
Congratulations on your pregnancy,
But from your tone, it seems quite clear
That I should admit paternity.

Consulting with my legal team
I must decline your kind request.
I must confess your very name
Remains unknown. The question of a test

Seems thus superfluous. Is this perhaps
A circular produced from your computer?
I do recall a night when several of our chaps
Enjoyed the pleasures of a lady fair.

I was myself abstemious and so, my honey,
You must seek another source for alimony.

Tom Billsborough

A Very Froggy Night

Burglar Bill was on the job.
But sadly he had come to rob
The wise one of the town.
She looked him up. She looked him down.
This small, fat-bellied slob
And with a flicker of her wand
She turned him into frog.
When he got home, his wife looked up
As he began to speak.
"You've got an awful croak, my dear
And you're green about the gills, "
She cried with some concern, I fear.
" You could be taking ill, my sweet
You look a tad off colour.
Some brandy and warm water
Might clear your funny head.
So hop off to your bed."
So off he bounded up the stairs
And left her in a stew
She'd never seen him quite like that
And she didn't know what toad do.

Tom Billsborough

A Walk In The Park

The altos of the larks ascending
And of the lake's uplifting fountain
Soprano swoops of swift and swallow..
As I'm walking through the park.

The bass and tenor of brass bands playing
The steady hum of cafe choirs
Gnomes and elves in dells and hollows
As I'm walking through the park.

In the distance dogs are barking,
Off the leash to meet their mates
Or romping after various objects
As I'm walking through the park.

Lovers holding hands and smooching
Oblivious to those whistling boys
Who'd run a mile if girls approached them
As I'm walking through the park.

Pretty girls in summer dresses
Sizing up the local talent
As they chat and drink their coffees
As I'm walking in the park.

So many sounds, melodious music
Flourish like the birth of Spring
I am alone yet feel included
As I'm walking through the park.

Tom Billsborough

Abandoned Room

Abandoned room
Ownerless house
The emptiness stalks
Beneath my words.

Tom Billsborough

Abandoned Village

Below me, grey waves break,
As brittle slates scooped up
From cavernous seas
And I the village doomed to wait
Alone for company.

My dream's low steeple stands
Empty as abandoned faith,
My bells forever silent.
My brickwork crumbling like a skin disease,
My roofs exposing battens, beams.

My gardens overgrown with brambles, weeds.
My school of learning now a tenement
For rats and spiders and invasive gulls,
Its playground void of laughter and wild games.

The old slate quarry, now a monument□
To the onset of dementia,
Its flooded tunnels, its rusted cogs and rails
Its broken driving belts bear testament
To the exhaustion of ideas, ideals.

I am that skeleton stretched out,
Exposed to dry, being
Of nondescript antiquity.

Visitors may come but they are few
Who briefly glance at plaques of history
And shake their heads as if in sorrow,
Reminded of their own tomorrow,
Before they picnic by the slated walls.

Tom Billsborough

Alien Abduction

The Mortal remains upon the couch
While Buzzo and Fizzo are applying suction
To his mouth. His tongue
And undigested food fly out.
He didn't enjoy his alien abduction,
Test after test had been applied
As he lies paralysed with fear
At these odd creatures without mouth or ear.
Just two huge heads, pale green in colour,
And a circular eye the size of a saucer,
No body to speak of, just a circular counter
As they hovered above him
Shaking their heads as if in pity.
He's got the feel they weren't in raptures
About their recent human capture.
It's just as well he didn't hear
Their insolent conclusions.

"A rudimentary creature, full of holes,
Especially this one which emits loud noises,
Belches, and some form of basic language.
Certainly not the renowned sage
We expected from his alleged high status.
His tongue has no connection to his brain.
Let's send him back from whence he came,
That big white house in Washington."

Tom Billsborough

All At Sea

Compulsively concerned,
Claudia considered constipative confections.
Cheddar cheese, course.
Chewers choose cashews,
Cows choose cud.
Could cheese change constipation?
Canned cherries can.
Chowder can calamitously.
Can can?
Creative cooking can compose
Complete corrective concoctions.
Core considerations? Classic candidate?
Chilli con carne! Correct!
C!

Tom Billsborough

All Our Yesterdays

What if tomorrow became yesterday
And yesterday tomorrow
The future behind us
And of no consequence
And we caught forever
In the thick webs of nostalgia
As vague memory becomes
Relived reality.
Would we then banish Time's illusion
As a recreated past became our present?
What if we could choose our specific moments:
First love, youth, a favourite holiday.
Think of the expense we'd save!
Could we make improvements
To that first experience?
Undo words regretfully said
Or the cruel consequence
Of unwitting acts.
I need to explore this further.

Tom Billsborough

All The Peas

Politicians pontificate. Pontiffs pray.
Prey produce proteins.
Proteins produce potent people.
People produce pregnant pauses.
Pauses propose punctuation.
Punctuation provides parentheses.
Parenthesis proclaim particular partitions.
Partitions promote political paradoxes.
Paradoxes please popular poets,
Perhaps prophetically profound.
Profound portents panic primitive peoples.
Peep-holes provide pornographic postures.
Postures promote peristalsis.
Peristasis pumps produce.
Produce provides plausible politicians.
Politicians pontificate. Pontiffs,
Perfect people, pan polemics.
Polemics pan.
Pans preheated produce parched peas.
Parched peas produce political pronouncements.

What is it? An awful lot of wind.

Tom Billsborough

An Absence Of Force

The upright Life to be devoid of Sin
Needs not your Moorish javelins
Nor bow nor poisoned arrows
Carried in dark quivers.

Tom Billsborough

An Early Valentine Card

I love you, dear, with all my heart
Except when you propel a fart.
Then kissing you is quite a task
When I'm wearing my gas mask.
I pray to God and the Holy Ghost
You lay off eating beans on toast.
If you answer to my prayer
Refreshing me with cleaner air
I shall be yours for ever more
The only one I do adore.
I'm not a one to wail and whine.
So will you be my Valentine!

Tom Billsborough

An Egg Related Poem

Two eggs, one a large duck egg and his mate, a Chicken Egg, went into a bar. It was very busy so they had to scramble to get to the Counter.

'Hey, you two poachers, or what?' growled a big guy, banging down his pint.

'No, we're both hard-boiled, and we'll sort you out, fatso, if you don't mind your lip.' cracked the Duck Egg, excitedly.

'Naw, you two's all yeller inside,' laughed the big guy.

'Now then,' interposed the Chicken Egg.. 'Don't go starting no trouble. His blood'll mess up your Shell Suit. It's the only one you've got.'

There followed the usual stand-off with fists waved etc but the big man went back to his mates at the table.

'Sure cooked his goose,' he declared.

'Yeh, right,' muttered his mates, winking at each other.

'It's your turn to shell out,' said the Chicken Egg.

'Eggscuse me! ' I paid last time.'

'You pay? You must be yoking! You never pay,' squeaked the Chicken Egg, as he called over the Bartender.

'Two pints of your best Ale, my man,' the Chicken Egg cried.

'Er, fried we only serve Omelettes in here. Rules is Rules,' replied The Bartender.

Well, at this they both cracked up and were consequently served...

As Omelettes.

So everybody was eggstatic.

And the moral is: You can't use hard-boiled eggs as Omelettes. Whoops knew I'd blundered somewhere! Shall I start again?

Tom Billsborough

An Evening At The Opera

Sharp as Gilda's aria,
Caro nome and the pause
Before the crescendo of applause
Saluting Rigoletto,
I remember
The blush, brief rose,
And the sweet scent of lavender
As I returned her fallen programme
And her lips part with a gentle "grazie";
I remember too her blue stilettos
In the House lights' pallid glow
But I never asked her name,
That evening in Milan.

Tom Billsborough

An Ode To Water

Water, rondeau, source of being,
Loquacious stream adaptive to my ears.
How your rhymes and rhythms flow
Like consciousness itself,
Constantly recurring in the same space.
Water, wakening unconscious earth
For in the deepest recesses of your being,
The very Ocean floors
The sulphurous plumes arose
From hydrothermal vents
And chemosynthesis occurred
To mix the carbons, metals, sugars
Essential to all life
Creating the first breath and the slow
Progress to our consciousness.
Sounds becoming words rounded by sounds,
Until new words were formed
For new abstractions and new ideas.
The poem formed in bubbles
By a stream continuous
From the very start of being,
Water wakening unconscious earth!

Tom Billsborough

An Old Copper

He used to pound the beat,
But now no longer.
He now expounds on how
To beat the pounds
That widen out the girth
And threaten health,
Still laying down the law,
As in his former days,
In all the local bars.
Fists may pound
The counter to remind
As he omits to stand his round,
But does he listen? No!
Ears pound and beat
A quick retreat,
Poor souls,
To distant watering holes
No more say
Hello, hello, hello
As he comes their way.

Tom Billsborough

Anubis Smiles

Anubis smiles
Sirius rising. He understood
The power of prophecy
And the abundant flood.
Arms raised to bring a complex liturgy
To mask the sanctity of science.
Words sharp as mica and the mirroring spears
Arrayed before the wide protective sands.
Oh Pharaoh! Plunge your hands
Into this bowl of seeds
And may the coming tide
Be proportionate to your needs.

Tom Billsborough

Any Suggestions?

Transition of the conscious self,
Immortality,
Rebirth with a vague memory
Of a previous life?
I use a word "kleve";
Sounding like clever without the "r";
When looking for a small sharp knife
I use for peeling new potatoes.
I don't know why
But it's said automatically.
I tried to solve the mystery
But only found one tongue
Remotely close.
This was Welsh whose word
Is spelled Cyllell, pronounced Keltheth.
A bit far-fetched, I thought.
But what about its sister tongues,
Breton being one of these.
And by research
I found a Breton word "kleze";
Which means a sword.
That's odd, I thought.
When young I had a strange recurring dream
Of falling from the roof
Of some cathedral in France.
And yet these dreams of falling
Are quite common, I believe.
Are these merely memories of
Stories read and words heard
And gathered subconsciously,
The source forgotten.
Now that's the mystery.

Tom Billsborough

Apple Trees

An apple ripens,
Bends the highest bough,
Beyond our reach, outstretching.
Suspended too, the skylark's
Alto trilling blends
So many notes
Together in a single second,
Beyond our reach, our understanding.
And yet our dreams grow tall
In our attempts to mime
In lyrics of a rhyme
The song-bird's complex call
And deep space probes
Ascend, by sling-shots flung,
And bend along the universe
Towards the highest boughs
Of light where supernovae ripen.
To reach them is our ultimate conceit.

Tom Billsborough

Applied Maths

Dilly's blonde, a lovely woman
Who won the hearts of many a man.
She had no maths degree
But then found out that three
Could soon work out from one plus one

Tom Billsborough

Arctic Lights

Amber, turquoise, emerald lights
Like Courtiers cavort
Before the Princess of the night,
Who dons her diamond crown,
Reflecting dancing sequins
upon her velvet gown
Which, wave by wave, unfolds
At her command,
The unseen hand of genuine majesty,
Beyond the compass of the fading
Monarchies of tenuous heredity.

Tom Billsborough

Art's Progress

Let my song in slow
Sure steps evolve
As eyes and wings
In gradual mutations
To resolve its complex being.
No need of miracles
Though chance may yet conspire
To add a polish to our art.
The end is understanding.
The visionary eagle soars
To target his horizons.

Tom Billsborough

Au Sujet Des Miroirs

Regardez le miroir, les yeux ouverts,
Mais pas dans une tour enfumée.
Elle n'existe plus!
Alors vous vous verrez come votes êtes
Et vos ennemis apparents? Disparus!
Puis regardez Janus, le corbeau,
Il est assis sur votre épaule.
Et il devient plus gros et plus gros
Comme it se nourrit de votre liberté.

Tom Billsborough

Automatic Verse

The poem writes itself if we but dream,
Ready as the sprinter in his blocks
Awaiting the release, the starting shot,
Taut and primed as we await the theme.
It's off! Oh, what a splendid start..
And now the flow of rhythms and of rhymes
Sweep it onwards to the winning line.
Sometimes this may happen in real life.
A poem comes without a hint of strife.

Tom Billsborough

Autumn

A stone arcs into the water.
Circles within circles ripple
Distorting the mirror.
As I stand upon the shore.
And the fallen leaves
Are gathered in circles
Flame-red, orange and yellow
To enhance the ritual.
And sun's red circle
Commands a hollow sky.
I light two candles
Intone a gentle orison
To hallow this fruitful season.
Let us fill our granaries and stores!
For soon a white wind
Will starve the meadows.
And we must survive
The necessary shadows
Which lengthen as we stand
Between the flickering flames.

Tom Billsborough

Away- Rosalia Castro

Away from the cadences of waves
And the moaning of the wind,
Away from uncertain reflections
Lighting the wood and the cloud,
Away from the calls of passing birds,
Away from unknown rural scents
The west wind steals from valley or hills,
There are worlds where souls sinking
Under the world's weight find peace.

Tom Billsborough

Ba Ba

Mary found a little lamb
It said its name was TUP
It followed her back home one day,
And so she put it up.

Tom Billsborough

Bach's G Minor Fugue

The tone is dark, insistent.
A stream of water constantly
Encountering dams.
A image of foreboding.
Yet its six beat rhythms
Enter in my soul
And bring out images
Of bridges, waterfalls
That strange continuum of water
Which I love but oddly fear,
Seeking that still pool
Which Bach will not allow,
Wishing to express its energy.
One day I mean to write
A fugue in rhyme
Six minutes long, the time
To correspond with his Great Fugue.
Meanwhile I'll listen
To its flow and measure
Out my plan with care.

Tom Billsborough

Bad Pun

According to myth
Gpldilocks stole some porridge
Can't BEAR it in jail!

Tom Billsborough

Barbara

You will remember, Barbara,
It rained incessantly that day
Upon the streets of Brest.
And you were walking, smiling
And ravishingly blooming,
And rain-drop drippingly gay.

You will remember, Barbara,
It rained incessantly in Brest
And I crossed paths with you
In Siam Street where we exchanged smiles.

You will remember, Barbara,
You whom I did not know
And who did not know me.
Remember, remember that day
Anyway. Never forget it, please.
Under a porch for a shelter
A man called out your name:
Barbara.
And you ran towards him in the rain,
Ravishingly blooming, and rain-drop dripping,
And threw yourself into his arms.

You will remember, Barbara.
Do not be vexed if I call you 'tu'.
I use it for all of those I love,
Even if I've just seen them but once.
I use for all who love one another,
Even if I do not know them at all.

You will remember, Barbara,
The wise and joyous rain
Upon your happy face, that happy town,
That rain upon the sea,
The arsenal too and on the Ushant boat.

Oh Barbara, how stupid is this war,
How are you now under this rain

Of iron and fire and steel and blood,
And he who embraced you in his arm
Missing, still alive, or dead?

Oh Barbara,
It is raining incessantly in Brest
As it was before.
But it's not the same anymore.
All is damaged now.
It is a rain of an awful and desolate mourning.
No longer the storm
Of iron, steel and blood.
It is simply the clouds dying like dogs,
Dogs that disappear in a stream over Brest
And go to rot far away,
So far, far away from Brest,
Of which nothing remains.

Tom Billsborough

Beautiful Dreamer

I was her willing sheep.
Her smile, it was sin deep,
Which, in retrospect, was no deception,
A formal introduction
To a fine seduction.
My heart was on her platter.
It didn't matter
At my great age a touch of gratitude
And perhaps some fortitude
Was now required.
Especially as she brought her friend along,
A gorgeous blonde
As lustful as herself.
I was now a man of wealth.
My heart and bed were full
Life won't be dull, I thought
As I woke up to find they'd disappeared!

Tom Billsborough

Beautify

Turn hatred into a rosebush in the garden of your silence.
Receive as offerings the arrows that shoot you.
Clean the dark adherences carried by each word:
When passing from mind to mind they cease to be
Translucent coffers and become opaque moons.
In mute lands grows the golden flower.

Tom Billsborough

Betty On The Jetty

Betty on the jetty
Waiting for her sailor man.
White sails in the distance
Betty with her pram.

Billy's words, they are a' ringing
In her lovely little ears
Words of love she is singing
As the tall ship nears.

How he spoke them, O so softly
To her pretty little face
You're the only girl for me
Within the human race.

And he said them to Dolores
O so sweetly in her lingo
With her he took his ease
In the port of Valparaiso.

There was Jenny, lovely Jenny
Her eyes a hazel brown.
She was his only one, you see
In New Bedford town!

Naughty Billy, naughty Billy
He really got around.
Many babies did he father
The dirty little hound.

Betty on the jetty
Waiting for her sailor man
White sails in the distance
Betty with her pram.

Tom Billsborough

Birth Of Fashion

Beyond that very first Creation
And Sammy snake's oration.
It is my sincere belief
That a strategic leaf
Was Fashion's first sensation!

Tom Billsborough

Black Hole

There's a black hole
In my consciousness
I feel less whole
Diminishing
As it swallows up the light
Diminished by my lack of Faith,
Dark, dark, dark, I become
As the sun consumed by night.

In a distant park
A lone dog is heard to bark,
Lost, bereft of its master.
I too am lost
Cry out for guidance, Faith
As the gathering night encloses.
People with Faith, hold out your torch,
And bring me back to light.
You will not scorch me with your truths.

Tom Billsborough

Blackberry Bushes

O paroles, choses mordantes dans le cerveaux,
Je vous prie. Cessez ces chansons ravissant,
Faisant s'envoler mon cadeau, sommeil.
Comme un vent qui fait perdre les pétales
Roses des ronces et démasque les murs verts

Oh words, biting in my mind,
I plead with you to cease these ravishing songs,
Blowing away the present of my sleep
Like a wind which causes to fall
The pink petals of the bramble
And reveals the unripe berries.

Tom Billsborough

Blackbird

The blackbird taps for supper
On the lawn.
A worm responds.
You'd think they'd learn.
Who's at the door.

Tom Billsborough

Blank Verse

The Spirit drips so golden from the Still.
Persistent as a beating heart.
Oh that my words would learn the part
To be as constant as my will
To write.

Some days I look upon a page
My mind as blank, with no desire
To raise a spark to light the fire
No phrases can I forage.
O dark night.

Tom Billsborough

Blessed Be

Blessed are those whose minds
Can probe the true causes of matter
And reduce to dust all ancient terrors
and inexorable fate of the clamouring
dark waters of Acheron,
And the eternal ferryman.
And blessed too those who know
and honour the gods of the countryside,
Pan, Silvanus and the sister Nymphs
who bathe in the clear streams of consciousness.

Tom Billsborough

Blue Flax

After many years
A single flower reappears.
I don't know why.
Blue flax, its pale eye
Peering up at me,
From its thin, precarious perch
At the lawn's right edge.
Its green lids close at Eve
Awaiting tomorrow.
Blue flax, holds out its cup
For Pixies sipping nectar.
Maybe it was her,
The Lady of those magical dreams,
Who conjured this up for me,
Coming again in the same year.
I used to look in wonder
At its large and highly
Polished brown seeds,
And the smell of linseed oil.
I used to wonder too
How such thin stems created
From its long fibres
Those Linen shirts
So cool in summer.
But mostly, blue flax,
I think of those Pixies,
Sipping nectar!

Tom Billsborough

Blue Is My Colour

Looking into sunlight,
My blue eyes
Now shut tight,
Allow this sapphire gem
To swim into my view,
Within a sunset aura,
My mind's lagoon
Turns turquoise as it fades.
I squeeze my eyes to hold
It fervently as though
It were a thought of just
Analogy to make
A song succeed. Too soon
It fades but not the pleasure
That the colour gives,
Nor the aptness of the phrase

Tom Billsborough

Bluebeard

Knowing skulls, too lately wise, provide the final
Nightmare and the girls, cauterized by screams,
Close up the charnel chamber,
Thankful to survive.

Tom Billsborough

Boat Race

The cox? She went to Girton
Of that, I am quite certain.
A comely lass but better still
Our little Lil from Somerville.
Our Oxford girls in navy blue
Will trounce that light blue crew.
As they slid off, we cheered indeed
Our girls soon earned a canvas lead.
But as the oars took on the strain
The paler blues began to gain
And won it by a country mile
But our lasses won on style!

Tom Billsborough

Bonnie Prince Charlie

Blackbird songs ring through the trees
The merle is calling from the fen
Where you are beyond the seas
Will ye no come back again?

Tom Billsborough

Boss Cat

It is a sign of great munificence
That I am spared
One chicken leg
From Purry's modest feast.

I do not beg. I get the sense
That I am specially favoured
In his retinue of slaves.
Since he behaves
So generously to me.

Now if I am in luck
I even get a slice of duck
Though this rare
As that particular bird
Is top of Purry's menu.

Mine too! I consider,
As I place the tiny sliver
Upon my Chinese pancake
Spread with Hoisin sauce,
Checking its position minutely
With my microscope.

The problem is my cat
Is getting fat.
What's that? Put him on a diet?
But dietary control
Is not upon his schedules,
I'm afraid.

And, as for exercise, a languid stroll
Around the pond and back
Towards his larder
Or his choice of beds
Is Purry's plan.

As you can
See, he's retired

Early from the cares of life,
And I'm required
Just to open doors,
And hunt in stores
Like some old-fashioned wife!

Tom Billsborough

Bossy Tom

It is a sign of great munificence
That I am spared
One chicken leg
From Purry's modest feast.

I do not beg. I get the sense
That I am specially favoured
In his retinue of slaves.
Since he behaves
So generously to me.

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And I'm required
Just to open doors,
And hunt in stores
Like some old-fashioned wife!

Tom Billsborough

Breaking New Ground

So Humpty Dumpty
Became an Egg-shell finish!
Once more on a wall.

Tom Billsborough

Brief Cameos

Brief cameos, old memories.
The deep blue eyes,
A light voice,
The accent sweeter than a Gaelic song,
Portpatrick harbour glowing in the dusk
The sea stretching in its restless sleep,
The Irish Ferry, brightly lit,
Making for Loch Ryan and Stranraer.
Encounters brief but poignant
In the fading rose of sunset.
We sat upon a seat and talked a while.
I never asked her name,
The meeting didn't warrant,
Which I regret and yet
It did preserve the mystery.
Of course I wonder
What became of her.

Tom Billsborough

Brief Encounters

Their midweek affair, urbane and regular,
Conducted with care in the convivial
Surroundings of the anonymous motel,
Gave Bald Cyril and Bashful Flora
Just the right balance of pleasure and danger.
Their regular pit-stop of illicit pleasure
To the piped music of the manic motorway
Was to massage the soul and stale conjugal duties,
They supposed, creating a righteous furrow
To seed their legal endeavours
With vigour renewed. But that was yesterday,
Or more precisely the previous Wednesday.
Today, our Bashful Flora was feeling some unrest,
The tightening of her bra across her chest,
A rebellious waist swelling in unison.
What was this? Seditious? As she mused on Cyril's pate
Sparkling in the sunlight and looking like
That huge Supermarket melon, pale yellow too,
She'd bought the other day, now in her lap!
This wasn't right, humour creeping into their hallowed affair.
But it crept and crept into her lips and eyes.
It took her by surprise as it travelled at alarming speed
Through arms and legs and belly and to her very soul,
Shaking her beyond control, into a bouncing balloon
Of hysterics! I am told the scene was fortified
By Cyril's shocked indignant postures, signalling
The final fall of these brief encounters!

Tom Billsborough

Brock Mill

Supple dream snake, iridescent and cool,
Coiling forever to a deep, dark pool;
Forever in motion and forever still
Beyond the grasp of the skeletal mill,
Constantly sloughing on brittle stones
The skin of its waves, its sibilant sounds.

Supple dream snake, iridescent and cool,
Coiling forever to a deep, dark pool;
Creating on rock a precise sculpture
Enduring edge between past and future,
And in my mind where the past is worn
I seek the edge where peace is born.

Supple dream snake, iridescent and cool,
Coiling forever in a deep, dark pool;
I wreath my hands in your sensuous coils
But fail to capture my Protean spoils.
For you dissolve and I am bound
Between parentheses of touch and sound.

Tom Billsborough

Bugloss

Bees spiral up the bugloss staves,
On the blue mauve bells
Practise their alchemy.
Whether by choice or chance,
They spiral upwards, always upwards,
In a rousing anthem.

And, in my drone's hive,
Where thoughts buzz like chancers
At a dance,
A song of pure gold swells to the spiral
Influx of colours and old dreams.
But not mine. I am witness only
And the watcher of spiralling bees,
Here to marvel at a finer female art.

Tom Billsborough

Bull Run

Lords and Ladies came
To watch the first great battle.
Home like Bulls they Run!

Tom Billsborough

Butterfly

The dream is my cocoon.
A silent womb from which
With sudden surge
A butterfly may emerge
With peacock wings
To draw upon the nectar
Of bright flowers.
In such brief hours
A song is born
To renovate the soul,
So it may float into
A further dreaming.

Tom Billsborough

By The Pond

Sapphire damsel flies
Over still waters hover
Your blue eyes surmise.

Tom Billsborough

Cantique De Mesa

Here I lie in my burning chapel!
Surrounding me
On every side I see
A throng of torches standing sentinel.
Nor are they candles lit, but puissant stars
Great Virgins blazing before God's face,
Which, seen in adorations, bears such grace
As Mary declares herself unworthy.
And I, mankind, Intelligence, am lying
Prone upon the earth,
Preparing for my death
Upon a solemn bier now descending
Into this, the deepest deep of Universe,
The very middle of this immense bubble
Of stars where in a close huddle
Holds still your place, the devout faith.

And here I see collect the Night's vast clergy,
Its bishops and its Patriarchs
And up above my head stands stark
The lonely pole star, at my sides the very edge
And that equator curving out afar
Where reside the swarming animals
Of space, which one, unknowing, calls
The Milky Way... a binding lace, taut arch.

Not one of you, O brilliant ones, supports
The soul, but she alone

The earth.. the central one
Who, bearing forth her man exhorts
Your rapture, makes you turn your heads
Toward her like a million sheep..
She your shepherd, watcher of your sleep,
And your Messiah, singing for your dawn.

Tom Billsborough

Canzone

Flowers open, dreams form,
Swarm to me perpetual stars!
And down below
But in slow motion
Trees by fibrous roots
Renew sensations
Through the forest sounding boards.
We, with one accord,
Must now embrace our tactile world
And let the Spirits be
To vague philosophy.

Tom Billsborough

Care Home

They wait and wait and wait,
The nearly dead,
Mostly slumped in chairs asleep,
Whilst those awake are deep
Within the drowning process
Of their fate
in the grey sea of boredom that surrounds.

They wonder why they're there at all,
These castaways
In a care home without care.
Some stare at the TV mounted on the wall
Where endless films
You wouldn't pay a dime for
Reel out their trivial acts,
The sound too low to follow.

She ticks and ticks and ticks,
The nurse now at her desk,
In the furthest corner of the room.
It is her doom to fill in forms
Which authority requires
To give assurance that the quality of care
Is adequate, Life reduced
To page, on page, on page
Of self-deceptive narrative.

Some warders take advantage
Of a shed outside
To smoke, and joke and talk,
And gain relief from the gnawing sense
That they too are bound
Within this island of despair.

Badly paid, they work long hours,
Yet some are still inspired
To stir the inmates
With a game or two, or quiz,
Or gentle exercise.

But to be fair
The response is tepid
As the tea they serve at intervals.
Visitors are rare
The sense of true abandonment
Seeps into every bone
And chills the soul.

Tom Billsborough

Career Move

Catch a falling star
And put her into Adverts
She'll not fade away.

Tom Billsborough

Cat And Owl

Mon chat est assis sur le genou.
Sur l'autre se repose mon hibou.
Chaque un s'endort
Par jour de cours
Mais par nuit ils cherchent ses joujoux!

Tom Billsborough

Cat Burglar

Strawberries and cream! I'm eating my dream,
When who should pop up with his scheme.
It's that roguish black cat
It's no wonder he's fat
For he's made off with my lovely fresh cream.

Tom Billsborough

Cat Training

Purry's scarpered off to bed
There to rest his lazy head.
He opens door but
Never pulls em shut
After all that I have said!

Tom Billsborough

Cat, Moon And Silliness

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE READER

This poem is set to the rhythm of Eddie Cantor's song "Keep young and beautiful" from Roman Scandals. Can be seen on U Tube. Ideally this is a performance poem and to get the full flavour

You will require about fifty showgirls prancing about as you recite it. If your budget doesn't run that far, you could hire some elderly gentlemen who have made a name for themselves "dancing" at Weddings. What you lose in glamour, you gain in silliness! In the absence of a large ballroom, the garden would be ideal. It might wake up the neighbours. Best performed under a full moon.

It's your duty to be lyrical
And should I add quite risible
Not to mention rhythmical
If you want to be read..

Cats, moons and silliness
They go together like egg and cress,
Cats, moons and silliness
If you want to be read.

Mr. Purreeee's on the Moon
Eating cheese from a Spoon
Singing out this lovely tune
When he nips to bed.

When he wanders back to earth
With additions to his girth
He won't join in with all the mirth
The lad's been too well fed..

It's your duty to be lyrical
And should I add quite risible
Not to mention rhythmical
If you want to be read..

Tom Billsborough

Cataract

Waterfalls of words.
Cascading down
From reservoirs of being.
Sometimes I am seeing
Ghosts of songs,
Arising from the cloudy plumes
Of spray forced up
From the pure depths of our Niagaras.

Tom Billsborough

Cathedral

Above, below, the deepest blues surround my berth.
The capsule is complete and gently sways,
The deep silence now inducing sleep.
Voices from the past stand sentinel
In that vast bell muted by slow sound.
This is my cathedral where profound peace
Engenders song and images in sharply
Focused dreams. It seems appropriate
That the gently lapping waves enhance
The flow of words that tumble out
Like happy children on the last day of term.
Who would curb their singing?
Too long have I denied my inner being.
□

Tom Billsborough

Chemical Changes

It slowly grows in a dish of hypo.
The image positive.
How I wish
The negative could be dismissed
By such a dark room trick,
With blinds drawn, with the red light
And with chemical magic!
Doubts resume as the sunlight enters
Our Consciousness.
But should we not address
A new faith in the creative act
Based on the pure fact of self
And Nietzsche's dream
Of the eternal return
And compose hymns to the beauty of being
Of seeing our own image
Transformed from negative
To positive
As in this dish of hypo.

Tom Billsborough

Cheshire Cheese

Cheshire Cheese, a Pub,
Drag act, Cerise. Diamond Lil.
Roast hecklers alive!

Tom Billsborough

Chess Moves Part Two

PAWN

Cannon fodder piece?
But Pawns sometimes promoted.
Sex change! Become Queens!

Sicilian Defense.
May Mafia not take offence!
"King" well protected.

Tom Billsborough

Child In Crisis

Only the wax doll listens
To her deep sorrow,
The torment of tomorrow.

Tom Billsborough

Choosing A Pet

I need a new pet but I'm at a loss.
You can't count the cat.
He's no pet. He's the boss.

An Elephant might do.
I could nick one from the Zoo.
I'm sure they wouldn't mind
If they find they're one behind
They must have a dozen or two.

I could take it to the pub
For some tasty grub
And maybe a few gallons of beer
I'd cry; 'Fill your trunk, my dear.'
But then I checked on Google. Zounds
They eat a hundred pounds
Of veg. each day! That's more
Even than a hungry teenager!

Better try another option.
For my new adoption.
Something with a lovely smile..
Of course, a crocodile!
It would love my great wide pond
And the jungle reaching out beyond.
I could brush her little teeth
Stroke her jaw line just beneath..
And put a pretty ribbon on her snout.
But then I have a doubt.

What would she have to eat?
What is her favourite treat?
An Antelope or two..
From the local Zoo...?
Why take the risk of being caught
With neighbours easily sought.
His wife would shed a tear
If old Ron over there
Were suddenly to disappear!

Or maybe not. From what she said,
He's pretty well half dead,
Already, So we'd be doing her a favour,
And a fat treat for you, Clarissa.

What's that you say, young Purry?
Something nice and furry?
What, like that shrew you're playing with
Just like a toy..A toy A toy
Oh boy why didn't I think of that solution.
A Kangaroo or stuffed hippo
To decorate my patio.
And it would cost me zilch in food
In prosecutions, or being sued
By widows of departed neighbours
Thanks, Purry, for another of your favours!

Tom Billsborough

Chucking Out Time

When my wife begins to sing
Usually the Marseillaise
Eyes glaze over,
Beer glasses crash to the ground,
All scream, hearts pound
And there's a frantic stampede
For the door.
Even the local drunk staggers at speed
Or crawls along the floor
To escape her dulcet tones.
"That's enough, " cries the announcer.
"Who needs a bouncer
When we have a weapon like that! "

Tom Billsborough

City Streets

This is the City primeval with the murderous jams and the gridlock.
Canyons of noise, and yet silent souls, grey shadows of the twilight.
Stand the tall buildings, commanding obedience but rarely aesthetic,
Standing in blocks, like poker chips stacked, prepared for the gambles of
humans.
Loud, loud the commuting traffic, conducted by lights, its discordant music,
Streams of metallic light sweeping the lonely to distant lonely suburbs.

Tom Billsborough

Clement Marot A Rondeau

On kissing her, she said: "Darling without blame
This single kiss which our two mouths embalm
Is on account of bliss that's much desired."
These were the very words she gently proferred,
Meaning to appease my growing flame.

But speaking thus, she did my heart inflame
Her breath more fragrant than a balsam balm
Fanned the fire for which Love has been prepared,
On kissing her.

Yes, no-one knew how much my soul became
So fevered on the mouth of my sweet dame
Whose amorous body died, or so it seemed,
And if our joined lips much longer had been sealed
She would have sucked my soul out, I proclaim,
On kissing her.

Tom Billsborough

Clocking It

Watched clocks always toil.
Moving clocks are often slow
Clocking moves means Chess.

Tom Billsborough

Cold Calling

So you're out in the garden sunbathing
In your favourite canvas lounge
Nursing a drink of lager, or whatever you prefer
When, suddenly the telephone's ringing
With its sharp insistent tone.
Oh! Who the heck is that, you inwardly groan.
Some casual friend or enemy
Who's made your life a misery
By calling in the afternoon?

No, No, it's British Glass or some such crew.
Who want to do a survey just for you.
Well, that's the usual selling line they pass.
Now, what do you do, my boy?
Well, you suddenly become the butler
You know, the one you don't employ
And put on a posh old accent in reply.
'Sorry, sir, his Lordship's not at home.
He's out a hunting foxes, I'm afraid.
Oh, hang on a mo. I hear the traces jangling
And the distant sounds of horns.
Could you please continue hanging
On a moment longer. Thank you sir.'
So you set down the receiver...
You naughty old deceiver..
And resume your sunbed dozing for a certain time
Helping yourself of course to a lager and a lime!

Or if you wish, become another character,
Perhaps a giggly maid from under-stairs.
It needs a high-pitched voice. Think Arias.
And the ability to act
With Oscar winning speechifying tact
That she, a mere serving maid is picked
For such a great and unexpected honour.
Be ready with your sighs, your sorrowful tears
When finally for are made to realise
It isn't you but your lord and Master who's required.
Now here you have a choice.

Show anger in your voice
Or adopt a pleading tone..
Anything to keep the beggar on the phone.
It could take twenty minutes or an hour or more
But one thing's sure. He won't ring you no more.
So off you trot and do enjoy your lager
In the peaceful setting of your sunny garden.

Tom Billsborough

Collecting Liquid Gold

Next we drove to Barry's farm, o'er Scorton way
'This family's quite posh, ' my Dad began to say
Backing his lorry into the loading bay.
'They own three hundred cattle, Jerseys,
Friesians too, ' he went on to explain.
At that a thought passed through my brain.
Giving cows a jersey would really keep them warm.
I reckoned this must be a very special farm.
Wool, I guessed, and were they different colours?
Like football teams doing press-ups on all fours.
'Are they woolly Jerseys, ' I then enquired at last.
My father laughed so much he almost breathed his last
As he neatly he braked two inches from the bays.
He then explained with a twinkle in his eyes
The cows came first from Jersey, in the Channel Isles.
As for wearing jerseys, he added with a smile,
Maybe so the winter, but a trifle hot today!
He winked at Jim, my brother, who had begun to grin.
He was a year wiser then and a lot more sin'
My father spun the churns along and eager for the fray
We started on the bottled milk, pale yellow at the necks,
Some we carried, most we slid along the shiny decks.
And soon we'd done and loaded up and just about to go
When Mr Barry came along and suddenly cried: Whoa! '
'Those lads of yours need building up. This is what they need.
Two bottles of this creamy milk from the world's best breed.
He gave my Dad another two and waved us on our way.
Wow! This isn't work, I grinned. It's a flipping holiday.
So off we went through country lanes and round a windy bend

And up a steady slope we drove at last to Harris End.
Here Dad stopped the lorry and clutching each our prizes
We sat upon the grassy slope among the sparkling daisies.
And here it was we drank that milk, so rich in butterfat,
So cool and smooth as silk in all that August heat.
And down below the fields spread out to distant Morecambe Bay,
To Silverdale and Lakeland fells not so far away.
Now when I drop to Lancaster from o'er the Bowland way,
I think of Dad and Jersey milk that sunny August day

Tom Billsborough

Communication

In dreams, perhaps,
The hand that sows the stars
Made forgotten music sound
Like the note of an immense lyre
And to our lips came a humble wave
Of a few words of truth.

Tom Billsborough

Concave Mirrors

In halls of concave mirrors,
I address the essence
Of my consciousness.
May the mantras of my pulse
Delete slack substance
To locate an inner peace:
Reduce sensation
To a single point of light
A diamond sparking in the dark,
Abandoning the abstract.
Let the mind eliminate
The cool assertions of logic
And the planned response.
One note suffices.
With a constant beat
We must allow ourselves
To drift into repose
Within these halls of concave mirrors.

Tom Billsborough

Concentration

The greater obstacle
Is the image of myself.
Obliterate the personal
To view the object
with dispassionate grace.
Remove the carapace
Of learning and of taste
The hooded consciousness.
Become the owl
Which in its soundless flight
Relies on sight to fix its prey.
Resist the world of maybe.

Tom Billsborough

Consciousness

Left right, left right, left right,
Do I keep pace with my existential self?
I think I see me as I am,
But in reverse, of course, a micro
Second late. And my nostalgic
Self continuously flows
Back into an ever changing
Past where, modified by experience,
Memories bloom as nebulae
In the vast regions of space
Littered with the frail debris
Of my acts. And what of this,
The present impasse where consciousness,
Apparent choice prevail?
Is it real? Or just some sleep-walk
In a self deluded trance?
Come out! Come out! My so-called soul,
Wherever you are, if you exist
At all, unconscious trigger
Unseen puppeteer, for whom
My conscious self may act
As mouthpiece and a dummy exhibiting
Convincing signs of life.

Tom Billsborough

Controlled Substance

A controlled substance am I,
A mobile pharmacy,
And open all hours
To the smart tricks of chemistry.
Without any prescription
Or authorised borrowing
There is no restriction
To its games as I'm sleeping.
Someone in there is having a ball.
It could be my double
It could be my soul.
Whoever it is, they'd better keep going.
Or I won't be hearing the next cock crowing!

Tom Billsborough

Corporations

Meteoric death
For Economies of Scale
Dinosaurs... no more.

Tom Billsborough

Creamy Chocolate Cake

Guy the gorilla
Needed a filla
For his new made chocolate cake.
His perfect dream
Was a tube of cream
And this was his big mistake.

He went round the house
He asked his young spouse
Who banged her big chest
And said with frosty
Voice she was in need of a rest,
So get lost! Thee!

But at last he espied
On a ledge at the side
Of his bath a gleaming white tube.
Found it, my Rube,
He cried to his wife
Who woke, now ready for strife.
So he hid in the kitchen
Where he was itchin'
To cream up his beautiful cake.
So he squeezed out a lake
Of the stuff, oozy white.
So he took a big bite
And swallowed it whole
Then let out a scream to appal!
His wife came a running,
By this time fuming,
And grabbed the tube from his paw.
It's toothpaste! She cried with a loud guffaw!
Nor could she spare a comforting word
For her hubby's misericord.
At least his grief
Would have some relief
To ease his bout of sorrow.
He'd have shiny teeth tomorrow!

Tom Billsborough

Creating Song

Seek not the song.
It will seek you
Lightly as the morning dew
That settles on the grass.
Or as a breeze that breathes among
The leaves of ash and elder
Where under shadows dream.
Seek not the theme
It will seek you
Sifting what is true
In your experience.
Your quiet contemplation
Will produce the image
From which first shoots
Your poem's flowers grow.

Tom Billsborough

Creative Force

The miracle of Life
Lies in our dreams,
The randomizing seeds
Which energize compulsion
A dark creative force
Beyond our comprehension
Forcing us to sing.
We have no option
But to fashion it in words.
We cannot stop their flow.
I am but a violin
Continuing on its score
Until the final note is played
And the melody is complete.
But I do not decide.
No, I do not decide!

Tom Billsborough

Cruel Love Louise Labe

Such torments, Oh too much of them I smart
And with such menace and approaching ruin
Thinking of death, my mind it doth determine
Nothing else will cure my aching heart.

The more that Love assails us with its power
The more we are determined to recover
As always fresher combats recommence.

It's not for nothing Love will give us favour
It scorns the Gods and mere men together
Strengthening to face their growing force.

Tom Billsborough

Cubist Poem

Your eyes meet mine
Four lives combine,
Inside and out, you and me
Collide in chemistry.

Tom Billsborough

Cull A Burning Rose

A horseman passes on the plain.
A girl is thinking of him here
And of that fleet in Mytilene.
The iron blade is shining there.

And, as they culled the burning rose,
Their eyes at once grew loving wild.
What a sun the mouth that roves
To which the mouth has smiled.

Tom Billsborough

Dance Of The Starlings

Sucking the breeze,
Adroitly the starlings wheel
Out, reshaping the sky.
Consensuous cloud!
And conscious mind
Spinning its axial dreams
To create a continuous poem.
Such rapture it is to witness
Their consummately
Varied stanzas
And the dove-tailing
Of their rondeaux!

Tom Billsborough

Dancing Queen

Dance halls were our Dilly's treat
But sadly she had two left feet
As she approached the Bar
Her casualties of War
Cried out as one: Let's hop it!

Tom Billsborough

Danger

Hawk on Chimney pot
Lone Sparrow signals danger
Look out, old fellow.

Tom Billsborough

Dawn

Perception kisses.
So bring a smile to her eyes.
Call her your Sunrise.

Tom Billsborough

Dawn By Arthur Rimbaud

I then embraced the Summer dawn.
Nothing moved on palace brows.
The water dead, the camp of shadows
Did not leave the woodland path.
I walked, waking warm and living breath.
The one I met upon this path,
Now full of cool, pale radiance,
A flower who gave to me her name.
I laughed at the blond haired waterfall.
Dishevelling her locks between the pines
And recognized the goddess
Set atop the distant silver peak.

Tom Billsborough

Dawn By Maurice

The White Dawn has hardly finished
Adorning herself with brilliant gold and rose
When my spirit which had totally perished
In the confused depths of many a cause
Came back to me as the drawn curtains now expose
Me, making me more invincible against death.
But you who have, and you alone, the power of faith
To bring such happiness to lighten up my destiny
You will be my myrrh, the purifying breath
Against the worms of my mortality.

Tom Billsborough

Day In The Life Of A Sausage

Absorbed by Silence
The Feline Spirit awakens.
Dreams come out like claws.

Tom Billsborough

Daybreak

New York's dawn contains
Four mired columns
And a hurricane of black doves
Which paddle in putrid water.

New York's dawn groans
Along immense stairways,
Seeking between ledges
Tuberoses of delineated anguish.

Dawn comes and no-one welcomes it
In the mouth for neither morning nor hope
can occur. At times, coins in swarms of fury
Pierce and devour abandoned children.

The first to emerge know in their bones
There will be no paradise nor natural love;
They know they enter the mire of figures and laws,
And artless games and fruitless sweat.

The Light is buried in chains and noises
In the shameless challenge of rootless science.
Within the suburbs, sleepless crowds now stagger,
As if escaping from a shipwreck of blood.

Tom Billsborough

Day-Dreamer

We are in Committee, minutes read,
And we alert as hares
Ready for the business now ahead,
Until the usual bore becalms desire.
Sincere intent is quickly led astray
And daydreams reappear, inevitable as tides
In which I gladly wade and lapse,
Considering first an acronym for ass
On which our lady "chair", I must confess,
Is cushioned with abundance.
Though small of stature, seated she grows tall.
I dream now of two peaches
Which I eat upon a sunlit beach in paradise,
Where she must bounce along,
Dressed only in a thong,
Deliciously swaying but only for my eyes.
Now I'm no engineer so cannot figure
Out the pure mechanics of the female walk.
Mesmerizing is the only word that suits!
But anyway, why talk?
It is enough to follow and admire.
Yet I digress, but so do you in dreams.
That acronym for ass..
Association of sausages stranglers? Will that pass?
Naw! Area for serious surveys is better.
But then am I brought back to sudden life.
The double chin that wobbled as he spoke
Is now at rest. Loud sighs erupt to wake me up.
Yet am I lost, a Martian who alights
Upon an unknown planet.
You know the feeling of being somewhere else,
And wondering who the hell these others are.
At last, I whisper to my colleague to my left:
"His mouth is not agape
And yet there is no masking tape. How odd."
She starts to giggle. Oh, I am that cruel sort
Who loves a giggler and with vile intent
Determines to have them giggle more.
She makes me giggle too until a hard look

From the chair dismisses our frivolity.
What cheek, I grumble.
It was her delicious double which led me first astray!

Tom Billsborough

Decision Making

The membership
Deliberates. The Result?
A sub-committee.

Tom Billsborough

Decision Making 2

Propose a review
That way we procrastinate.
Kick into long grass.

Tom Billsborough

Depression

A tense present is the present test
Of our cognition of current dates, events,
And people of distinction.
And if we fail to recognize
The past tense, that dusty library of memories
Comes under scrutiny.
How many books remain?
How many taken out and not replaced?
How soon an empty room,
A functionless space?
How soon to face that old nightmare
Sense of hollowness and ultimate depression.
Where I possess only the tense future
With the muffled bell ringing
"Will I breathe tomorrow? "
When I view the future of another
I sit alone and nurture
A deep sorrow as my songs fail to flower
And I feel there's nothing more to say,
As though dark clouds had cast the sun away.

Tom Billsborough

Desert Island Dreams

Day's cares sink, drown in sleep,
Waves of consciousness
Folded in the deep
To be replaced by rising tides of dreams.
Oh, what oceans to traverse on these!
The undiscovered silence
Of the green lagoon
The smooth white sands
Untrodden and unseen
Our footprints first to mark the virgin beach,
Our words the first to name a chuckling stream,
Using language to create our space,
Our new identity,
Which we possess with joy.
For we alone determine all
Unless some governor unseen
Appoints our dream.

Tom Billsborough

Despair

Without love or hate
What languor pierces my heart?
No cause to my fate.

Tom Billsborough

Diamonds

Many copy but few create that pure carbon
By immense pressure wrought in the dark earth
Of the consciousness.

Lying there for years unseen, unless
You concentrate your will into a single point
Of light, and drill beneath the layered seams
Of learned behaviour and of automatic rhyme,
And by your meditation find
The origin and source of who you are
And bring it sparkingly to light.

Tom Billsborough

Diana

Belt fastened, Diana, tunic firmly tied,
Fully accoutred in her hunting gear,
The whole day so chastely occupied□
Hunts and catches many a stag and deer.
But you, Diana, being the more composed,
With acts less cruel and no such brutal lance,
Also hunt with chaste and gentle glance
Those whom your pursuit so harries to despair.
They burn now in your virtuous fire and dance
About you, while the beasts will flee from her.

Tom Billsborough

Dinner Time

My Vultures circle.
It's time I fed those rascals
Ah, here's my lawyer!

Tom Billsborough

Dnuof Ton

Ereht tuo ydobynd ereht si
Elbisivni emoceb I evah
Elbisir si siht, ddo si siht
Yad had ood ed elddif, ho
Yadot tih a dah t'nevah i tub
Citnalta ediw eht ssorca
Kcit, kcit kcit
Kcolc `o neves s'ti
Cod pu s'tahw

Tom Billsborough

Doge Loredano

Forever island in your equipoise.
In salmon-pinks and silver you arose
As Venice from a ground of blue to gain
Through many years of prudence
A delicate, precarious balance.

Doge Loredano, you remain
A proud memorial of enduring grace,
And art's frail refuge in the face
Of the true foe your city can't contain,
Once her life-blood and her source of fame
Now the slow scourge of vandalising Time.

Tom Billsborough

Don't Feed The Crocodiles

Splash not in unfamiliar water,
Tom,
Verse ain't no laughing matter.
It's time to nurse your intellect,
A weighty theme select
To get some serious work upon your file.
Crocodiles may smile,
And indeed they do,
A wide and toothy grin
But not necessarily for you.
They may have other plans
They don't eat out of cans,
You know.. well maybe the odd tin
Or two if they waddle off
Towards the local store
Causing the cash-out queue
To hurry up somewhat.
But generally their favourite meat
Is freely offered food.
So splash not in unfamiliar water,
Tom. It could be you!

Tom Billsborough

Don't Run, Gentlefolk. Walk.

They told us not to run at school
A motto I uphold religiously
I'm no fool.
My lack of speed while walking
Is prodigiously
Controlled. I only break my vow,
Sacred as a Trappist vow of silence,
And allow myself a trot
When now and then the Ice-cream Van shoots past
Playing "Greensleeves" or some such merry air.
To be fair I then trot rather fast.
To purchase several cornets of Vanilla.
Five for me and two for my Gorilla.
I give her less cos she drips it on her dress
Her table manners rather less than perfect,
I'm afraid but she has no other defects
Apart from wrecking benches in the zones
When she sits down to lick her ice-cream cones.
A wall is better and we have a ball
Watching the sad commuters rushing by
Last minute Johnnies, sometimes I sigh.
If only they had been to proper schools
Where walking at a priest's pace was the norm.
The poor fools!

Tom Billsborough

Dors Bien, Mon Ami

I find death wanting. It has no allure
On such frail stems the harebells grow
Blue eyes that scan the blue
From perilous ledges on their
cliff-side perch
True pioneers which search
The wide horizon, blue on blue,
For dreams of new beginnings.
I find death wanting. It has no allure
I shall grow again upon
The shallow soil of my despair.
The sea may toil for ever
But has no need for shadows.
Goodbye, my friend.
Sleep well until the morrow.

Tom Billsborough

Dreaming

Une dame dans une robe rouge
Se tient près de la fenêtre,
Tenant un verre de vin rouge,
Admirant le coucher du soleil rouge.
être ou ne pas être
Dans cette salle bondée
Ou là-bas avec ses rêves?

Tom Billsborough

Early Memories

Memory collects from every sense
which Words mould into experience
In the museum of our consciousness.
In the Beginning, was St John correct
To choose word as the dominating factor?
Or did the first explosion,
Breach the combustible silence.
Birth's trauma and its tsunami of light.
So making the instigator sight?
And yet we learn that in the womb
The sense of touch comes first,
Followed by the bonding union
Of child and mother.
But do we remember this in retrospect
As the first encounter with our senses?
Or is it a flower's scent
Which still illuminates an early incident
Or the insistent Mnemonics
Of music and of rhyme.
Which resonate through the cortex of our mind
Into the deepest caves of Time.
I have no visual memory before the age of two
The first I can recall was of a bonfire
In a street and sounds of joy and laughter.
I think it was VE day. I could be wrong.
Memory will change the substance
Of each incident or song.
So we come back to words,
We learned by the age of two,
So perhaps St John spoke true
At least as far as memory.

Tom Billsborough

Eating Out

When Deidre's chompers start to pound,
I cannot hear another sound.
and, as she downs a two pound steak
The Band itself begins to quake.
Next time I'll bring my hungry hound.

Tom Billsborough

Elegy For Isa

My sighs are deeper than the dark wind's moan,
For now I am alone, am now alone
Knowing that you will not be here
Next day, next week, next year.
The memories alone will come again.
So may my thoughts of you remain
As constant as the flowers that bring
Sweet beauty to the coming Spring.

Tom Billsborough

Elegy To A Meadow

The meadow land is fallow
Below a carapace of sorrow,
Bright summer hues subdued
And green supplanted by
Industrial grey,
Low buildings rising
Cold as tombstones
Where once the coppices of beech
Bid fiery welcome
And the oak trees soared
Compelling wonder
And the spirit of adventure.
Where poppies' scarlet arias
Regaled the choir of marigold,
Of oxeye and the sapphire cornflower,
And patriarchal teasel,
Their cups brim full of water,
Became the playground of the raucous sparrows,
And all around us bees
With fruitful industry
Hugged the bugloss and red campion.
The only buzz I hear is that of saws
In this field of fallow.
Where are the sounds of yesteryear?

Tom Billsborough

Elephant Man

Perplexing times ahead.
I'm having a brain transplant
And I'm going to choose elephant
It must be said.
For I think it no fallacy
That a wonderful memory
Is chiefly the gain to be had.

Tom Billsborough

Elle Sut Aimer

Ce soir je demeure seul,
Au coin du feu
Accueillant sa chaleur,
Rêvant d'une amie
Qui sut aimer.
Trop près des flammes
On est brulé.
Trop loin aussi.
Parce que le cierge éternel
Est toujours dans
L'église de mon âme.
Oui, cette femme là
Elle sut aimer!

Tom Billsborough

Eloge

The meats grill in open wind. The sauces thicken.
Smoke climbs sharply up the paths
And catches up with one who walks along.

Now the dreamer, he with dirty cheeks,
Must break away from ancient dreams
All striped with violent scenes
And tricks and brilliant lights.

And laced in sweat he now descends
Towards this scent of meat...
So like a loitering woman,
His clothing coarse and cheap,
His linen and his hair in disarray.

Tom Billsborough

Emergency

Panic Stations here
Wife to take singing lessons.
Masking tape required.

Tom Billsborough

End Game

Don't play your crocodile at cards
For you'll regret it afterwards.
If you shout "Snap",
It'll close its trap
And collect its just rewards.

Tom Billsborough

Enjoy Life

After my audience at Dawn,
I take Spring clothes to pawn.
Each evening I return,
No longer sober
And owing debts for wine
In every quarter.
Still, these days a man
Rarely reaches seventy..
So I watch the butterflies
Taking deep draughts
From lovely flowers,
And dragon-flies skimming
And hovering over the water:
Wind, light and Time spinning forever.
Let us enjoy Life while we can!

Tom Billsborough

Epitaph For A Gambler

Racing made him Hoarse.
Fortunes swung from bad to worse.
Now he is stable.

Tom Billsborough

Ercilla

Arauco's stones, the water flowers sailing free,
Vast territories of trampled roots now greet
The man who came from Spain. His armour they invade
With giant lichens, ferns' shadows trample down his sword.
The native ivy place their azure hands
Upon the planet's silence, come so late.
Man. O famed Ercilla, now I hear the pulse of water
Greet your latest dawn, the birds' frenzy,
Thunder in the foliage.. Oh, leave your golden eagle's
Claw mark here, rasp your cheek upon the unkempt maize.
It matters not. The earth devours all.
Oh, famed Ercilla, only you will never drink the cup of blood,
Oh, famed Ercilla, only to the rapid splendour
Born of you will come the secret mouth
Of time in vain. To speak to you... in vain.
In vain, in vain, the blood in crystal-splattered branches,
In vain, within the Puma's night, defiant tread of soldiers,
In vain, the orders, steps of wounded men.
It all comes back to silence, feather-crowned,
In which a king, remote, devours creepers.

Tom Billsborough

Error To Origin

Too many on phone
Re.. expanding Universe.
Not my fault, cried God.

But God had to hide.
ERROR TO ORIGIN `bliged
Thanks again, P.H.

Tom Billsborough

Esprit

What is this word, esprit?
Your smile reflected in a pool
As minnows dart like small electric lights,
Your voice soft and subtle
As it enters like a butterfly
each membrane of my soul.
A girl of many sounds and faces
Is the word esprit.
I try to catch its meaning
Like these elusive creatures
But it is in their natures
Never to be still.
One could call it joy
But that will not suffice
To clothe its eloquence.
Spirit, in a sense,
But closer to infinity,
A bird of paradise
In all its preening mystery.

Tom Billsborough

Eternal Plasma

Oh sea,
Your eternal plasma whispers to me.
I am the real, you but a passing dream.
I am the nothingness
Which creates by being.
I am the unity
That you seek in song.
I the deep tarn, inscrutable as Tao.
I the cataract bathing in steam.
I am the Ganges and the Nile,
The yawning Pacific and the perpetual rain.
I am the heart but know no sorrow.
I shall not see you again tomorrow.
I have no desire to retain the fleeting,
Nor the unreality of seeing.

Tom Billsborough

Evening Comes

Shadows fall from distant hills.
Smoke bends requesting an answer
From the white farm in the hollow.
There is no answer
And no sorrow as night
Encloses me in a silky mantle.
How night brings relief
After the questioning sunlight!

Tom Billsborough

Evening In The Tirol

Light and this warm breeze
Dance through the flickering leaves
As fairies waking from their sleep
To tend the apple grove
As we tread up the slope towards the Mutteralm.
Below the Ice-green Inn strolls by
Unloading distant glaciers
And the City lights stretch far
Their brilliant arms salute
The stunning heights of Hafelekar.
A silky mantle with its purple glow
Descends upon us from the Alpine shadows
As step by step we gain the upper pastures.

Tom Billsborough

Evening Light

My eyes now follow
Trajectories of shadows.
Deep, dark green hollows
Beneath the elder,
Enhancing the meadowsweet's
White feathers
And the cascades of jasmine
Swimming like stars.
And the pale greens and purples
The bi-coloured marjoram
And the spiked betony.
I am seduced by these contrasts
Which the light now fingers
Shaping its sculptures
With trajectories of shadows.

Tom Billsborough

Evening Quartet

Song and moonlight, both of silver,
Echo as the sunset quits
This avenue of aspen trees,
Which gently shake their tremulous leaves,
And a nightingale begins to call
And the shy moon, emerging from the clouds,
Sends a cool rejoinder.
It is a courtship to remember
As we link hands and link the music
To the mirroring colour.

Tom Billsborough

Evensong

At vespers now and kneeling
Down white-hooded
Nuns commence their prayer:
'In principio et nunc et semper,
Et in secula saeculorum.
In low contralto
Through the frosted air.
And snowdrops supplicant
In the pale twilight
As if to echo in a Litany of rapture
The tremulous whispers
Of the virtuous choir.
Larger and smaller than surrounding
Stars and virtuous too, is Venus rising
And, from my dim sight,
Hiding her true and turbulent nature.

Tom Billsborough

Everything Comes...

She stood alone in her meadow,
This lovely grieving young widow.
But her neighbor next door,
Whom she did adore
Soon put an end to her fallow.

Tom Billsborough

Expecting A Reply

Am I invisible?
well let me see.
I'll look in the mirror.
No sign of me.

Tom Billsborough

Face Uncertain Past

New Dawn, unwritten page,
The future sparkles on the crests of waves.
And sage decisions will be taken.
For confidence is all!
For now your soul will shape its options
And words flow in conclusive tides,
Driven by faith in your creative function.
Oh, Man, how many stood
Upon this very shore
Bathing too in the blinding light
And yet forgot
The elongated shadows
Hidden from their sight.
Look back and face uncertain past
With its reversals,
Which memory unravels
With its malicious pleasure;
Assumptive errors confidently made
Which litter past endeavours
As flotsam piled behind you on the shore!

Tom Billsborough

Failure

Go forth, multiply.
The Lord commanded his team.
Came fifth. Head coach sacked.

Tom Billsborough

Fairy Flowers Part Four

She'd read my thoughts directly as magic women do.
And trail us through their mazes. That's delightful too!
"Sometimes we are quite naughty. The Elves have lacy boots
And when they are a sleeping amid the willow roots
We creep up close and tie their laces both together.
And when they wake, I am afraid, they fall right over."
The night progressed with fun and games and laughter
It was a time I shall recall today and ever after
But slowly as the Dawn arose the fairies flew away
Back to their flower beds where're they spent their day,
The last to leave that joyous spot was my kindly guide, my Rose.
" Will we ever meet again? " "Oh, yes, in your repose, "
She answered quickly and she smiled in bidding me farewell
And in an instant flew away from that magic dell.
I looked around and with a start I recognized the place.
My willow pillow was right there where I'd slept in peace.
But then I saw a shiny thing there upon the ground
I picked it up so carefully. A golden ring I'd found.
I studied it and found a mark. It was the letter "R"
Rose had left it just to show they really had been there.
So when I walk among my flowers I often say out loud:
"I know what you lot do at night. You crafty little crowd! "
□

Tom Billsborough

Fairy Flowers Part One

In the valley of the Brock I slowly walked alone
Where willows dipped their fingers in the flowing stream
As we ourselves did once to feel its cooling flow
In years gone by with no thoughts of tomorrow.
Deciduous woodlands rear up the steep shades,
Below the stream deepens where we'd splash and wade.
I crossed a plank footbridge at that place, Waddecar.
Where the valley broadens and the sunlight's is brighter.
I followed a pathway now gridded with shadows
Weaving upstream as the river slowly narrows
And came to a place where a willow has fallen,
Its roots exposed like a surrendering token.
"I'll rest here a while in this deep shady hollow
The trunk of this tree will make a firm pillow."
The heat was oppressive and so tempting the shade
And the grass was quite dry in this little green glade.
I lay back and listened to the bird-songs above,
And the murmuring waters as gentle as love.
In these peaceful surroundings, I soon fell asleep.
When I woke from my slumbers the darkness was deep.

Tom Billsborough

Fairy Flowers Part Three

She beckoned me into her world and I began to follow
Lifting up her lantern, she flit that sleepy hollow.
But something odd was happening. I saw her growing bigger
Or was the change in me, so was I getting smaller?
This oddity progressed apace as we went up the lane
As we drew near a moonlit dell as moths towards a flame.
So by the time we reached its rim, she was five feet tall
Or was it me, eight inches high, so very, very small.
But then I was distracted as I heard the fairies sing
As they had formed a circle dancing in a ring.
They all wore pretty dresses of many a different hue:
Some were dressed in purple, in whites, and shades of blue.
"This one is called Prunella and that is Meadowsweet, "
The first in glorious purple the other creamy white...
And all of us are flowers who do come out each Eve
We really like to party as you will now believe.
In daytime we are resting, as often students do,
When they should be at lectures and at their essays too."
I smiled at this remembering many a beer soaked night
But I never felt such joy as these fairies in moonlight.
"We only drink the nectar from our darling buttercup, "
I'll bring you some right now and you must have a sip."

Tom Billsborough

Fairy Flowers Part Two

No torch had I brought and the moonlight was faint.
No thought for tomorrow was my self-nagging taunt.
Then all of a sudden, as if suspended mid-air,
A light from a firefly appeared to draw near.
Frozen in wonder at this slow moving glow
I was trembling all over, if you really must know.
The light soon revealed its beautiful young bearer.
Six inches tall a fairy and none could be much fairer.
A perfect miniature was she in her petal rose attire
A wing-beat later she was there, perched on my little finger.
"Don't be alarmed. You've nothing to fear from me"
"Though blind, by my bright light so truly shall you see."
She spoke so precisely in a low melodious tone
So sweet her voice did sound, my hesitation drowned.
Yet I was still confused. What was this? A dream?
Was she but delusion, my mind's creative game?
But then my instinct told me that she was really there
And the flood of doubt abated in that cool night air.
"What is your name? " I asked her in a little whisper.
"My name is Rose, " she smiled. "By day I am a flower,
But only for a single day, then I disappear.
But come the morn I am reborn, a new bud bright and eager,
And in between, as you can see, I become a fairy."
I felt enchanted by her words, convinced about her story.

Tom Billsborough

Fertile Soil

Pale Dawn is fallow.
In silent soil the poem grows
Dreams of tomorrow.

Tom Billsborough

Festival

FESTIVAL

Steel fireworks!
How charming its lightening.
How cunning its creator
To mix some grace with courage.

Two shells, a pink burst,
Like two breasts revealed
Insolently hold out their tips.
He knew how to love.
What an epitaph!

A poet in the forest,
Carelessly views his revolver,
Its safety-catch on
And at roses dying of hope.

He dreams of Saadi's roses
And suddenly his head droops,
As a rose repeats the soft curve of a hip.

The air is full of a dreadful liquor
Filtered from half-closed stars.
The shells caress the night's soft perfume
In which you lie.
O, gangrene of roses!

Tom Billsborough

Fight At The Not So Ok Corral

Once upon a time in a small place called Tombstone, Arizona
there lived a man called Poey Munta When he was born the midwife slapped a
ticket on his backside with Error to Origin
stamped on it. He never forgot that and for the rest of his life kept repeating the
phrase at every opportunity. When he grew it he sold guns at a knock down
price for Family parties. Some were Republican and some were Democrat. Sadly,
he barely scratched a living at it but one day he had a terrific bulk order, four
revolvers,
and after the punters had left he danced a jig to his favourite tune,
"Wrong Verification Code."
His customers were Why A Twerp, who had just been elected Sheriff of
Tombstone, despite the fact that he had secured less votes than his rival, who
was hopping mad and warned him
not to go near her "Not so OK Corral" or she and the rest of the
Clantons would blow his ruddy head off! Why A Twerp and his three brothers
who were also Twerps weren't going to stand for this and right away went to buy
some new revolvers from Poey Munta. They were even more narked when Lady
Susan Godiva
galloped past on her white horse shouting insults at the Twerps.
"She's a bare faced cheek, " cried Why A...
"Not to mention bare cheeks, " added one of his brothers.
So stung into action the four Twerps and the Doc strode down Tombstone's main
street towards the "NOT so OK Corral"
They reckoned the three Clantons wouldn't stand a chance as
they took aim and squeezed their triggers. But instead of bullets popping out,
each gun sprouted a flag through its muzzle.
On each flag were those famous words "Error to Origin"
Knee-pad Billy Clanton and Hilary took full advantage and filled
the Twerps with lead. But danger was at hand. Doc Holliday had brought his
trusty shotgun and levelled it at Knee-pad Billy. But Wild Susan was at hand too
and with her lariat roped the good doctor just as he fired and dragged him off to
Boot hill. The Clantons cheered their super hero and soon loaded their cart with
Twerps and followed Wild Susan up to Boot Hill.
"It's a darn good thing you forgot to dress this morning, Miss Susan,
" Hilary observed. "You'd have been awful hot dragging
that Doc up here otherwise."
" Well, I say a girl should stay cool at all times, " winked Wild Susan
and her horse, also naked, whinnied in agreement.

Tom Billsborough

Finale

I expire
But will the white dwarf
Heed my final utterance?
No, both are bound by the same law
Of Atrophy and decadence.
No prequels can deflect
The arrowing of time.

Tom Billsborough

Fingers

Fingers remember
Their capacity to charm
Your hand on my arm.

Tom Billsborough

Fishing In Cities

I know an unpolluted stream
Where louche pikes congregate
To snatch the passing prey.
Under the weeping willows lurks
This unexpected terror,
Which bivouacs in corners.
The City traffic swims
Along the streams in bright acrylics,
and being careful not to touch,
As fish, exude a sense of nervousness.
But mostly they are confident
Of their self-elected fast response
To any danger threatened.
The shops gleam out, invite another world
As do the tall sides of aquaria
And passers-by will poke their noses
At the glass, as fishes do,
To gaze upon the bright arrays,
And on themselves, of course.
They too are cautious not to touch
Their fellows gliding past in streams.
While louche pikes congregate
To snatch unguarded goods
And kidnap cars.
This unexpected terror often
Bivouacked in corners.

Tom Billsborough

Fishing Is Easy

Flashes of silver he brought
Like a magician on stage
From the calm grey Cornish seas,
A string of Mackerel caught
On a line with ridiculous ease.
They thrashed as they fought
for air in the bottom of the boat
And were still wriggling for life
As we landed them ashore
In Boscastle harbour.
Twenty minutes later.
I gave away my share
To the couple in whose flat
We spent our holiday
In nearby Tintagel.
I couldn't face mackerel
For several years after.

Tom Billsborough

Fleswick Bay

Light breeze upon my face,
I feel your gentle touch,
And now the dark clouds part
With the soprano of sunlight,
Bringing delight and the creative
Tide which now returns to polish
Its self-portraying sculptures,
These carved ripples on sandstone
Slabs which line the shore,
Below the red cliffs
Which joyously stride out
To paddle in the sea!
And crimson poppies singing
To my soul, emblazoning the tall
Embankment as I now ride away
Content from Fleswick bay,
To contemplate this space, and the great
Beauty of your oval face.

Tom Billsborough

Flight Of Starlings

Grains of gunpowder
Starlings subjugate the sky
Leave whorls of thumbprints

Funnelling of nets
Their sylphic murmuration
Avoiding falcons.

Endlessly swirling
Black clusters become shadows
Lava lamp wonders.

Tom Billsborough

Flowers And The Grotto

If one day you came to my grotto
Which, lately, I have enclosed,
I could show you a thousand lovers
Into flowers now metamorphosed.
They feed on the tears of Dawn
Oh God I should be such a flower,
If you came along some day
And watered me with your tears.

Tom Billsborough

Following A Dream

Down a dim corridor of infinite length
I wander, following a voice that whispers
The atonement of faith.
Past doors half-closed like hidden guilts
The shuttered shadows of yesterday.
Passages lead off with no directions given,
Causing a momentary indecision.
Do I continue on the direct path
Or choose some random way
For answers to my silent prayers?
The voice ahead grows stronger
So I stay upon this chosen way
Until I reach a room so brightly lit
My eyes are cauterized, as though at birth,
When the world explodes upon
A new born child.
And I am filled with rapture as I stare
Intently through a window where
A wild flower meadow flourishes
And bees and butterflies hover
And sparrows dart and running water
Bounds in brief cascades and familiar
Faces smile at me with pleasure.
Is this a vision or mere illusion?

Tom Billsborough

Foul Mouthed Trees?

Purrry's Goody Bag

Contains CRUDE ASH. Swearing tree?

Purrry swears by it.

Tom Billsborough

Fountain Of Life

Time is what you borrow.
Forget tomorrow. AndYesterday?
Why suck the sloes
Of your regrets and sorrows
And bow your head in penitence
Before the ornate altar.
You are clothed in only
What you think you are.
The naked is interior.
The flowing fountain
And the rippling water
Ripe with oxygen.
Here you must begin again
Through passive meditation.

Tom Billsborough

Francis Scott Key

'I inscribe this chant for all my people' St Jean Perse

Out on a vessel in Chesapeake Bay
A young man arose at the break of the day
With nightmarish thoughts of Baltimore burning
After the memory of Washington's terror.
As he climbed to the deck, his stomach was churning
With great trepidation at the expected horror.
But then, in the distance a flag was unfurling
Over Fort McHenry his flag was still there!
How his heart leapt as he climbed up the rigging:
'Say, can't you see? ' he cried to his brothers.
And the air was rent with their loud, long cheering.
And then he sat down and wrote out his poem
A song for his people, a great national anthem.

Tom Billsborough

Fugue

Elle est seule là sur la plage,
Mirage, ma sœur poétique!
Son ombre tendue vers moi
Comme un doigt qui invite.
Orage de l'esprit!
Elle chante doucement, comme pour mimer
L'ascension and la chute d'une prière
Au-dessus du murmure constant de la mer
L'âme de l'assonance.

J'ajoute ma fugue d'échos et les pieds nus
Frappent sur les sables humides,
Six pas et puis une pause,
Six pas et puis une pause,
Comme je l'aborde sur la marge de la rive.
J'arrive. Nous sommes ensemble.
Et puis le poème est complet.

Tom Billsborough

Funny Girls

Judith is magic.
Donna and Annette abet!
Humorous threesome.

Tom Billsborough

Further Gleanings

FURTHER INSTRUMENTS

OBOE

Robin Hood's great ode.
Best left hidden among reeds
Add "L";. Goes with grease.

PICCOLO

Also the gherkins.
Another Italian job
Anagram; cool pic

TRIANGLE

Bang for Salvation
"It's my kind of Instrument";
It's Arthur de Square.

TROMBONE

Glenn Miller's own sound.
There are small bores and large bores
Don't mess with either!

TRUMPET

It's Voluntary.
The guy makes you real Dizzy!
Or a Concerto?

Tom Billsborough

Games Of Chess

I watch as she moves.
I see potential mate. No!
Queen's gambit. Headache!

I'm the Winter King.
In Prague between two castles
My Queen? A Czech mate.

Tom Billsborough

Geometric Shapes

SPHERES

Two attached behind
Maybe that orb'd maiden?
S'pose it's round here?

CUBE

You are square, Sugar!
Rubik invented one, the swine.
Robotic headgear.

CYLINDER

Sounds like two lasses
My Bike's got five, so there, Wes.
Contains your propane.

PYRAMID

Some Gizas built one.
A plaque is cheaper, Pharoah!
Shaky selling scam

CONE

Mine's a choc ice, please.
Used to annoy motorists
Fir Trees will bear them

Tom Billsborough

Get On With It

The Lord commanded
Go forth ye and multiply
Headaches no excuse.

Tom Billsborough

Get The Picture?

Seeing is an Art like any others,
In essence painting by numbers.□
Your perception of shapes
And colours already stored.
You follow the unconscious code
Believing you create your own picture.
Belief transfer to trash box
The things you wish to hide,
Like perennial ghosts reside
And sit on shiny rocks
And air their grief
Like imps of hell
Poking at the embers
And stoking up mischief.
They love your sense of certainty.
They know you think you're right
And see the true reality.
But out of sight, the doubts creep
In and join their little brothers,
And so the game proceeds.
But will your certainty recede?

Tom Billsborough

Getting Thru'

We are experiencing a high volume
Of calls today.
You are at queue position ONE.

Oh, goodie!

Please hold and one of our representatives
Will contact you shortly..

Vivaldi Springs into Life..
Da..da.. da.. etc

We are experiencing a high volume
Of calls today.
You are at queue position ONE.
Please hold and one of our representatives
Will contact you shortly..
We know you are waiting and apologize
For the delay..

Oh Goodie! More Vivaldi.. da da da..

Good morning. Please select one of the following
thirty options..
Press one if you wish to speak
To our representative in person
as soon as she has finished her toilet break.
Press two.. if you wish to complain to our
non-existent Customer Services Department..

I slam phone down in a state of collapse!

Tom Billsborough

Gleanings From The Cutting Room Floor Liquids

PART ONE MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

ACIDS

"Oh, dear, doctor, I've given him H₂SO₄, not H₂O, " nurse cried hotly.

"That'll sure clear his throat! " doctor replied acidly.

The patient screamed "It hurts"... somewhat impatiently.

"Now, now, you'll be all right, " nurse lied... somewhat implausibly. Sadly the guy died... and rather fatally.

BLOOD

"Now, where's the bleeding, sir? " the Doctor asked quite sanguinely.

"You know, my bleeding nose, " the patient cried.

"Ah, yes, " I see, " the nurse observed nosily and knowingly.

SALT SOLUTION

"Give him a Saline drip, " the doctor ordered saltily.

"Which lady? " asked nurse. "No, leave that witch till later, " he answered hazily.

INJECTIONS

"Left posterior, nurse.. Left! " Doctor instructed cheekily.

"Not right, left, you clown, " he roared directionally.

"Oh, sorry, Doc, I only know port and starboard, " she apologized navigationally.

"Oi, I ain't no pin cushion, " the patient cried, getting the needle quite sharply.

Tom Billsborough

Gleanings From The Cutting Room Floor Liquids Part 2

WATERING HOLES

'Oi, waiter, there's a crocodile in my soup, ' she complained snappily.

'Sorry m'am, I tell them till I'm blue in the face. Clear the swamp

BEFORE you ladle out the soup, ' he replied murkily.

'Now, what was it, sir? Two PINTS of bourbon? ' the barman asked wryly.

'No, madam, we don't serve kangaroo. They never sit still, ' he explained rather jumpily.

'These meat balls, yesterday they were huge. These two are tiny.

What's going on? Ah sometimes ze bull wins, senor, ' the waiter replied roundly.

'What you mean? All you have is Gin? ' the customer cried spiritedly.

'It is a Gin Palace, sir, ' the barman pointed out gingerly.

'Waiter, a wasp has crawled in my soup! '

The waiter looked down:

'No, sir, that's the butterfly. He's not learnt the crawl yet, ' he replied somewhat stingingly.

'Water! Water! ' he cried as he burst into the Oasis.

'Sorry, sir, water only for Camels. A soft drink, perhaps, ' the Bedouin replied cordially.

'Rum, waiter! '

'Jamaica, ' the waiter answered jokily.

'Not yet, but I'm working on it, ' he replied, looking at the blonde, craftily.

'I'd stick to the rum, sir, ' the waiter advised, measuredly.

'How's that? ' asked the punter.

'It's the only thing you'll be getting down tonight, sir, ' the waiter replied S-nickeringly.

'Sorry, everyone. Meat's off tonight, ' the Waiter said, apologetically. 'Just soup left.'

'How come? ' they all cried, questioningly.

'The Owner's dogs ate it all, ' the waiter replied, somewhat gruffly..

'Those dogs have ruined our evening, ' cried one of the girls: 'Catastrophically'

Tom Billsborough

Gleanings From The Cutting Room Floor Tom's

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS: MY REPLY TO WES AND
KELLY

PIANO

Costs more than a Grand
More keys than in Florida
Sounds like Shipping Firm

GUITAR

Duane Eddy's twang
I think Eric clapped on one.
Who plays? Brian May.

VIOLIN

Vanessa Mae ski?
Torquemada's last resort?
Upon the fiddle.

TUBA

To Ba... not to ba..
A big loud-mouth, just like me..
By Hamlet, the sheep.

DRUMS

Well, |I can't beat that.
Oft played by failed musicians.
Warning when distant.

BANJO

To stop McCarthy
Jon Ba. A mixed up old ram.
Duel for "Deliverance";

BAGPIPES

Lord Lovat's Lament.
Best heard through two thick ears muffs
Revenge of the Scots

HARP

You need pluck to play.
Far too many strings are attached
Heavenly music

Tom Billsborough

Global Warning

Can we deselect stupidity?
Coral blanches in the warming seas,
The Arctic cap recedes,
And indifference breeds
An expanding waist of greed.
This is no Greek tragedy.
This is not great Sophocles,
Not Oedipus destroying Mother Earth.
That was accidental. This far worse
As the white faced clown
Is chosen from the chorus,
Merely an Apprentice,
Plucked for the task,
By the call of avarice.

Tom Billsborough

God Is Feline

So, fastidious stranger, you relax
Your sleek black back the lure
Of all true slaves to touch
And supposed cure of all who crouch
Beside you and with meek hands,
Submissive voice, reach out in self-deceptive choice
Towards the Icon of their Faith.

It's with such languid grace that you stretch out
And so permit these long, slow strokes,
Which we, as worshippers, provide as prayers.
Your grace adapts us to your natural pace
And you allow a brief address,
In a low, respectful voice.
We imitate your mantra
That those in true control
Need few sounds to rule.

Or indeed to close a tedious interview.
With opal, agate or whatever gems
Your bold eyes fire and your broad tail
Dusts the chair anew with threatening
Behaviour. Fastidious stranger,
How royal your quick dismissal!

You prefer to be alone, recumbent sphinx,
Whilst we can only dream to be as you,
And share your God-like luxuries.

Tom Billsborough

Grace Darling

Amazing Grace, her father too,
Upon that Longstone beach,
They saw the wreck and they both knew
It would be hard to reach.

The storm blew wild, the seas were high
The rocks a mile afar,
No time to spare for they must fly
To reach that big Harcar.

The cobble boat they quickly launched
Upon that awesome tide
In moments they were sorely drenched
As waves swept o'er the side.

No thought of self, they ploughed straight on
Until they reached the wreck
They found that half the ship had gone
Just nine clung to the deck.

They loaded four upon their boat
And rowed them back to shore.
And Grace took care of three they brought
The others went for more.

So William and a man he saved
Now rowed to save the rest
The wind increased but still they braved
The storm to gain their quest.

Five other souls were saved that night
By fortitude so rare
By Will the keeper of the light,
His daughter, Grace, so fair.

When she took ill some four years on
That noble Hotspur clan
Now cared for her, as she had done,
As brave as any man.

Alas, their efforts were in vain,
The duchess at her side,
So Grace's light began to wane,
Immortal when she died.

Tom Billsborough

Granada

From my quarters
I hear the fountain
A tendril of vine
And a ray of sunshine.
They point to the place
In my heart.
Through the air
Of August clouds drift
And I dream not to dream
Within the fountain.

Tom Billsborough

Grey Waves Break With A Roar

Grey waves break with a roar
Upon a listless shore.
How dispossessed we are by grief
and by the thief of Death,
Insistent as the metronomic tide,
Dissolving these wide sands
And the platitudes of Faith,
And our belief in the eternal constant.
Grey waves break with a roar
and the ruthless innocence
Of bared claws etches my sorrow.
What will tomorrow bring?
The same tide and the same foam clinging
To my listless suffering.

Tom Billsborough

Groundhog Day

Groundhog day is here.
What? You've heard it all before?
So it's got you too!

Tom Billsborough

Gun Fight At The Ok Corral Points Scored

Shots rang out and several fell,
A scene plucked out of Deepest Hell.
The Clanton lad lay dying there
All at once they heard him murmur
'Where are my points? Oh were are they?
I lost them on a Saturday.'
Doc shook his head and Wyatt said:
'Don't get that, bud, . Besides he's dead.'

Tom Billsborough

Heavy Metal

Silence is golden
Said the Brass to the Copper.
He Lead her away.

That's how she met AL
Yes, he clapped her in irons.
Handcuffed together.

Down at the station;
"Got her, Sarg." "Good NICK AL, "
His sergeant replied.

To STEAL her revenge
Dressed in SILVER, she clapped him
In marriage later.

Tom Billsborough

Helix Nebula

In my mind's cradle, Time
Stencils a vast flowering of stars
In that lush pasture of our becoming.
How from birth's first explosion
Perception blooms as the rose
Pink eye of the helix
Nebula. And how, in the deep blue
Silence, songs sparkle
Along the pathways of the brain.
So many notes contained
Within each thought, each gesture.
As silent as a shadow, our unconscious
Mind maps out our future!
Who can form the words
Of sufficient beauty to honour
Fully these complex structures?

Tom Billsborough

Help! I've Been Banned From Posting

Apparently I've been banned for posting this message.

This is a totally innocuous message on a poem I liked. I can't see anything wrong with it. I have corresponded since with the author and she certainly didn't object. Now I can't post comments on anyone. I can't even contact Poem Hunter! If nothing is done about this I regret that I shall be forced to delete all my poems from this site. I shall certainly miss many friends.

This below is the offending comment

'A perfect breakfast for me. Toast and Marmalade (Old English) my favourite, washed down with strong black coffee. Wow! We must be twins. Love the sense of joy in this poem and the last one too. Looks like you don't accept marks. If you did these two would be straight tens from me!

Tom Billsborough'

If you have any question, please feel free to contact us

Regards.

Tom Billsborough

Here Comes The Bride

This verse is unrehearsed
But marriages are planned
With meticulous precision.
The groom awaits his doom,
Slightly stooped beside his friend
But slightly taller than I recall.
Perhaps perspective from my
Distant stall deceives.
But now the bridal march receives
The bride who, with her train,
Sweeps down the aisle
With what I'd call indecent haste.
She smiles deliciously to all
From side to side
And yet her smile to me
Is not so wide.
In fact it's somewhat quizzical.
My puzzlement is greater
Still than hers.
For George's younger daughter,
And John's intended bride,
Was auburn haired but this one's blonde.
What's going on? A change of plan?
Has he found a last second substitute?
My brain is destitute
Of reason, and panic
seizes my limbs
With a sudden shaking
As I lurch out of my pew.
Well, what can you do,
When you find you're in the wrong church?

Tom Billsborough

Hic Locus Est Patriae

The sky, too low for you, was torn.
The trees invaded your blood's space.
And so, Cassandra, other armies came
And nothing could survive their hot embrace.

A vase adorned the porch and he at ease
Returned and leaning on its marble, grinned.
So day went down upon the place called Trees.
Where once the day of speech, is now the night of Wind...

Tom Billsborough

High Rise Flats

High rise, high rise,
Tenements for the poor,
Slung up to the skies
Like a self-serving prayer.
Lifts that are broken,
Stairways forever,
Smelling of urine
And smelling of danger.
So be on your guard
If you are a stranger.

High rise, high rise,
Graffiti all over,
Parked in a wasteland
Of minimal care.
What of the people
Who have to live there?
Some may be dealers
But they're everywhere.
Haunts, you say, of the criminal class
But I have to say, that's hardly fair,
Since it's the big Criminals
Who have put them there.

Tom Billsborough

Highland Girls

Deep in the pinewoods, the girls perform dances,
Echoing the sounds of water over stones
And the sound of wind through the branches.
This is no white band of water nymphs, nor fauns
Of Diana, which the woodlands worship,
But country girls from Cuenca, honouring that fell
At whose foot two rivers kiss, their moist lips
Kissing also the pale soles of the girls' feet
As they weave their happy dances and meet,
Clasping white hands together in friendship,
Perhaps fearing that dancing apart might defeat it.

Tom Billsborough

Highway Maintenance

HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

PREAMBLE

I was stuck in a traffic jam behind that traditional Summer occasion called
"ROAD WORKS". I was behind a big van
Called "Highway Maintenance". My mind switched into idle mode
And inevitably silly mode followed. I considered the words..
Highway Maintenance.. Result of a Divorce? Well, roads split up.
Left, right straight ahead... into cul de Sacs.. Bit like marriages!
Then I thought about roads and made these jottings in my mind

MINOR ROADS kids' stuff

MAJOR ROADS For Military personnel only

TRUNK ROADS Beware of Elephants bearing uprooted
Trees (er Sorry.. Virgil)

BY ROADS Must be joking. Far too expensive

CIRCULAR ROAD Delivers leaflets you never read.

CROSS ROADS Be polite. A mad road is a bad, bad road.

ARTERIAL ROAD Listen for heart beat

RHODES ROAD only for Oxford Scholars.

HIGH & LOW I'll be in Scotland afore ye.

IN ROADS The smart place to be.

COUNTRY ROADS These follow ancient tracks made by
Seriously inebriated sheep on their way
Home from the pub.

ROAD WORKS This is where you drive up in your new
Stretch limo and the guy holding up the
"GO" sign thinks.. "Ah, we have a right

Smart ass here.." and promptly whizzes the

Sign round to "STOP" before you can get
Through. You look ahead and the drama
Unfolds. Chap in Orange safety jacket is
Leaning on his spade, peering intently at
A small hole. Just to his right a large
Committee has formed and a great
Discussion ensues. Have they discovered

Another astonishing archaeological find,
Like another King's body turning up.
Or possibly their next tea-break?
Doesn't matter. You sit there fuming.
Realising "Road Works" is meant to be
Ironic.

Tom Billsborough

Hindsight

Benefit of hindsight?
That would depend
On the position of the eye,
I'd say.
Back of the head.. all right
As an early warning system
But lower down.. Ah..em.
Better not go into that
A totally different concept.

Tom Billsborough

Hot Chocolate Strawberry Trifle

Hot chocolate Strawberry Trifle,
Now that's an eyeful if you please.
A friend of mine ate all of it
And it brought her to her knees.
Far too much I did admonish
You've wolfed down all the dish.
no wonder she feels quite sick.

Tom Billsborough

How Do We Measure Love?

How do we measure love?
My love. By choice or chance?
By the breath of memory
Echoing with smiles, shared experience,
Private words which water
The garden of desire,
The conspiring breeze
Wafting familiar scents
Across this small space we own,
Our intimate possessions.
Your voice becomes my song
And the whole throng
Of being rises like a choir
In descants with no ending
Filling the cathedral of my soul
With resonating power.

Tom Billsborough

How To Advertise

Nothing works better
For Piles than DINOMITE!
Only \$10 a jar!
In that case
Better use nothing!
It's cheaper by far.

Tom Billsborough

How To Dream

Now succumb to your inert
Nest of dreams, warm womb
Where you lie and need not move,
Learning to fly
In your mind's eye
Circling the moon
Or alighting upon
Some fairy realm
Peopled by sweet fantasy.
What magic we conceive
In distilling moments
Of pure silence!

Tom Billsborough

Hung By His Own Petard

A big black bird fell down one day
And landed in my po.
Oh pss! I cried and picked it out.
An old bedraggled Crow.

What shall I do with it, I asked.
As it began to caw.
Oh, shove it down the bog, you said.
No one will ever know.

It's not much use to anyone
All it does is swear.
They may fly high to some we know
But they're really lowly liars.

Tom Billsborough

Hungover Flowers

The pale blue hyacinth bows low,
Its clusters feathering my nose
With fragrant odours.
Such beauty and such fragility!

Tom Billsborough

I Am Here

"Chacun en soi et son ami vivra" Louise Labé

I am here and you are there
And you are here and I am there
As each to each the other moves
Constant as the murmuring waves
Breaking in soliloquies
Upon a silent shore,
The sea and sand together and apart
Yet always touching as you touch my heart.
For I am here and you are there
It matters not how far the where.
Each to each the love shall move
Since you are here and I am there.

Tom Billsborough

I Am Innocent, Yer Honour!

A stone's throw from my house
There is a broken window
It wasn't my fault, honest.
I was aiming for the door.

Tom Billsborough

I Live And A Die Louise Labe

All of a sudden I laugh and I cry.
In pleasure so many torments endure
My well-being is gone but never grows harder
And suddenly I blossom or soon become dry.

Therefore my Love leads me inconstantly on
And when I believe there is too much sadness
Without thinking I find myself all free of pain

And so when I believe my joy is so certain
And reaches the heights of my desire's gladness
I come once again to my incipient sickness.

Tom Billsborough

I Loved A Horse

I loved a horse. I forget his name.
He studied me frankly from under his mane.
His nostrils flared like living holes,
Two beautiful spheres and swelling above
The living hole of each of his eyes.
After he had run he would sweat so.
That is, he was shining and I pressed
Moons to his flanks beneath my child knees.
I loved a horse. I forget his name.
And often (for a beast knows better
What strength must bring us praise)
He raised a brazen head to his Gods,
Blowing, and furrowed with a network of veins.

Tom Billsborough

I Saw You Often

I saw you often with your head bowed low,
As if in sorrow from some awful wound,
Inflicted long ago.
And even when you smiled
Residual sadness lingered in your eyes,
As though you carried blame
For a loved one's harm,
Caused by another.
Unjust burden which I wished you shared.
I should have asked, if I'd dared.
It's now too late as we are far apart.
Yet I keep your warmth and sadness in my heart.

Tom Billsborough

I Wish I Were A Gorilla

If I were one and you were too
We'd end up in the local Zoo
Where W. Cs are free
No queues for entry
Have you quite finished in the LOO!

Tom Billsborough

If Music...

Fireflies, fireflies, small yellow flowers,
Lighting the woodlands in the wee small hours.
Consuela is playing her mellow guitar
Her eyes pale ochre, her lips cinnabar,
She sings to them sweetly her gypsy refrain
And dreams of her home in far away Spain.
The fireflies swirl as if to her beat
As she sits on the porch, a stamping her feet.
She feels like a Goddess commanding each soul
As they dance to her notes, each rise and each fall.

Tom Billsborough

I'm Not A Smart Man

You might think from my verse
No doubt you hold the view
That this one ain't no guy
Blessed with a high I.Q.

I like to bring out laughter
Set in my rhyming verse
But as you might conclude
Success is often terse.

But do I crave for ratings?
Not a jot, not me!
If they're a hit or miss with you
I don't really give a.....bean.

Tom Billsborough

Imagination

You quit me like a light,
Shadow snake so slight,
And sway in unison with a darker music.
And though I try with slow narcotic chants,
Or shrilling pipe, or tapping feet,
To capture from your comatose release,
Your essence, words cannot express
Your elusive substance.

Tom Billsborough

Imitation Of Psalm 146

My soul, no longer trust in promised world
It's light a glass, its favours shifting waves
Which always winds prevent from calming.
Let us leave these vanities, their strife.
It is God that gave us Life.
It is God whom we must love.

In vain, to satisfy our base desires,
We fawn in courts of Kings,
Our whole lives spent enduring
Their contempt on bended knees.
Their power is nothing, for they are as we,
In very truth, just men, who die as we.
For on their death, it is merely dust
That majesty so stately and so proud,
Whose pomp and splendour awed the world.
And in their gilded tombs where haughty souls
Still make a vain display.
They too succumb to worms and so decay.

And there is lost the titles of the Lords,
The arbiters of peace, the thunderbolts of Wars.
Once they have lost their sceptres
They have lost their flatterers,
Who join them in the common fall,
Down with their servants, all these wealthy souls.

Tom Billsborough

Immerse.

Demolish walls that bar you from yourself.
Eliminate the conceited puppet around your conscience.
They injected you with a hump's opinion.
They nailed you in Time defining you by age
They embedded you with the grim faces of ancestors.
They enclosed your being in a passport,
In a language, in a suit of mud
And mutilated your differences.
Cease to live around you,
Detach yourself from the superfluous.
Look for the invisible root until your self
Is free of beliefs. And immersed in happiness.

Tom Billsborough

Impulse.

your own, you live on a loan.
You cannot lift the veil.
Cease to hold your name. Open your hand
And let it slip till you call yourself Silence.
Hunting is forbidden, fishing allowed.
Come into the net you cast in your inner sea.
Be yourself the prey.
Into instinct submerge your conscience.
Ceasing to ask, receive as if you may
Be a sacred vessel.
You thought the treasure was fleeing.
Understand your search took it away.
You will cease to be a name any more
Among other names, but a transparent
Sphere that contains them.

Tom Billsborough

In Conclusion

It is the hymn's intent
To celebrate those elements
That first combined
To make the Miracle of Life.
Mother Moon which cradles
Like a child our orbit's balance,
The sun and stars that gave
The Minerals and light,
Hot geysers bubbling
From the Oceans' depths
Essential nutrients for life
Creating consciousness.
And metronomic Time
Allowing evolution
To develop this rich and diverse
World which we inhabit.
For these, I offer up this hymn.

Tom Billsborough

In Memory Of Billie Holiday

Lady Day, lady Day.
You will always take my breath away.
Your rich brown voice
Tears me apart with the power
Of its genuine anguish.
How I wish
I could write as you sang
But I have not suffered
The indignity of racial hate
Which was your fate
And of those strange fruit
You sang about.
Lady Day, Lady Day,
You will always take my breath away.

Tom Billsborough

In Memory Of Ezra Pound

The blossoms of the apricot

Wind unseen

Touched and touching

Recurring dream

Tom Billsborough

In Praise Of Woman

If you be friend, stand facing me
And spread the grace within your eyes.
In my season, garlands I would weave
Of love for you. Come holy lyre.
Accompany me.
And thus did Sappho sing.
And she the first to bare her soul
In genuine poetry.
Some now in scraps, a line or two
Which scholars still decipher,
But her soprano resonates
As a catalyst for literature.

Tom Billsborough

In Praise Of Woman Part Two

In depth and mystery,
The woman is the poem.
The rhythm of her walk
Is well worth following,
The sway of hips
Quite mesmerizing.
The parted lips
Inviting
Her natural smile
Our inner warming
Her eyes the catalysts
For instant dreaming.
In depth and mystery
The woman is the poem

Tom Billsborough

In The Beginning

In the beginning was the spark
That lit eternity's dark
Silence.
Poppy seeds too
From their capsule explode
And from a black mist
Many stars appear.
Much later the words
Coded our wonder.

Tom Billsborough

In The Catacombs

I wander through my catacomb of songs,
The half-remembered rhymes,
Which come like whispers
From the shadows, from every recess of the mind.
All this belongs to me, is part of me,
Uniquely mine, as though I was a house
Injected with a thousand ghosts,
A house abandoned to its consciousness,
Its rooms the tombs of past desires.
Nothing much endures. The plaster falls.
The paintwork peels. The wind and rain
Alone gain critical acclaim.
I wander through my catacomb of songs,
But not for long. No, not for long.
As now my memory fades.

Tom Billsborough

In The Long Grass

J'ai besoin d'un brebis, ma chère!
La pelouse est envahie encore.
La tondeuse est cassée.
Et je suis trop lassé
Coupant avec ces ciseaux! Mon dieu!

Tom Billsborough

In The Third Heaven

You are the light, I the substance
Stirred as a dormant seed,
From my long contentment
As poppies rise from soil disturbed
On a steep embankment
A sudden mass of dancing flames
Swelling like a vast choir
Of joyful release, and love.
But it was brief, my love, too brief,
As is the poppy's life,
And yet your light still lingers in my soul,
And as the poet sang in native Provençal
Negus vezur mon bel pensar no val.

Tom Billsborough

Incredibly Self-Deluded Male No 2

I enter a room.
Women swoon and fall over
Like my Dominoes. □

Tom Billsborough

Incredibly Self-Deluded Male No,3

Now you understand
Why I am big-headed, proud,
And my mouth so loud.

Tom Billsborough

Incredibly Self-Deluded Male No.1

Women have wondered
What the hell they see in me
It's a mystery.

Tom Billsborough

Injun Summer Part Four

No enemy appeared so we called the lookout down
"We'll have to fight among ourselves, " I told them with a frown.
"Now, which of you are Cowboys and which the Indians."
"Right, cowboys first... let's have a show of hands! "
Peter volunteered and he would be their leader
Evan liked to fire his gun. We needed one more bleeder.
Alan, helpful as is wont, raised Gord's reluctant arm
"Well, that's settled then. We'll raise a great alarm."
The Cowboys charged with guns ablaze but mainly
Squirting water while we defended gallantly
Our arrows causing slaughter.
We fell about and writhed, hamming it like actors.
Ten minutes more the battle raged with mock fights in the sand
Until at last the call came out to feed this hungry band.
Evan brought some ciggies out he nicked with practised ease
We passed one round to signify the pipe of peace.
We spluttered and we coughed a lot with baccy on our lips
And soon we abandoned the ciggies' sodden tips.
My brother made the dampers from a flour and water mix
And skilfully entwined them around our waiting sticks.
Some lit the fire which we knelt down before
The Tribe now reassembled by this delightful chore.
The dampers were "delicious" as everyone declared
Nodding to each other as cows within a herd.
We shared out other goodies then lay upon the sand,
Smugly proud and happy to be within that band.

Tom Billsborough

Injun Summer Part One

It's another happy jaunt for our little Injun tribe,
With loud, excited shouts and boasting wide
As the swirling river Ribble, brown as sin
As we march towards the bridge where we begin
Our brave invasion of the enemy's domain,
Shaking fist at imagined foes who still remain
Hidden from our view across the waters,
Clearly too scared of us, these Southern strangers!
Oh, we are well prepared for any such attack
With stout sticks and fist. So keep your distance, Jack.
We carry all we need to make our day
To celebrate the start of a Summer's holiday.
A wigwam, which is mine, with pegs and poles,
Sweets and nuts and pop to fill our souls,
And most of all the flour to make our dampers.
That's all we need to make us happy campers.

Tom Billsborough

Injun Summer Part Three

Across the bridge we turned now to the West
Following the Ribble on its journey to the coast.
A mile or so along a metalled road
And then along a dusty track we strode,
Ever watchful for an ambush to repel.
None came that day, and if I tell
The truth none ever came, only strangers
With their dogs and occasional anglers.
We let them pass without a single slaying.
Some Injuns we! We never did no scalping!
But it was fun to think what might have been
Even if we were softer than whipped Ice-cream.
Our usual destination was as a a rule
A place we called our Little Blackpool.
The soil was sandy here and usually quite dry
Room for our camp and room to lie
Upon the soft white sand beside the shore.
Upon the way we'd picked up twigs galore
To make our fire and some dry grass for tinder.
We'd post a lookout on the bank, our minder,
Usually Gordon whom we didn't really like,
Whilst we set to raise the Wigwam, spike
The pegs until it looked quite straight
And built the bonfire up until it looked quite neat.

Tom Billsborough

Injun Summer Part Two

Six braves we were who quickly breached the bridge
And scanned for danger from the valley's ridge.
Peter Upton first, the biggest of our brood
A strapping lad, but faints at the sight of blood:
And little Evan who was our climbing star,
Though in the classroom, he never climbed too far.
And Alan Wilkie, my best friend of this crew,
Who dreamed of far off places, horizons new,
And did indeed fulfil his life long dream
An engineer first, a Naval officer became.
The tallest one by far, it was my brother, Jim
And finally there's Gordon, but none of us liked him!
Too smart by half but really not that clever.
We needed him when he became our printer
For a news-sheet Pete and I composed together.
So boldly now we crossed the great divide
Between our Northern stronghold and that Southern side.

Tom Billsborough

Internet Connection

A kiss, a hug a gentle touch
So little and yet so much
you truly real.
You wrote, I wrote
But only with blind words
We sought each other's soul.
A tentative romance,
A disembodied dance
A dream of love unfurled
Beyond the tactile world
So bound to fail,
It's substance just Soliloquies
Mistaken for deep harmonies.
Mere whisperings of ghosts
Across the infinity of space.
But now I touch your face
I need no words to exorcise those dreams
which die like yesterday
Upon the midnight hour.
One touch and you appear
And in my arms you stay
A vibrant, and a gentle being.

Tom Billsborough

Into Space

Upon a tall breeze
The lark swims in thermals.
Oh! What ease! What melody
To soar into obscurity
Beyond my gaze.
As the sun's rays sparkle
On his conduit to the stars,
Whilst I am rooted
To the soil of reticence
Oblivious of his future
My limbs stiff as obedience.

Tom Billsborough

Invasions Of The Poltergeist

My outdoor shoes, when not in use,
Remain on duty in the lounge,
Discretely stationed out of view
To claim a broken limb or two.
But not today! Some supernatural
Power had whizzed them through the door
To reappear upon the kitchen floor,
And in full view. This won't do.
And yesterday my bedside clock
Had flown away together with a new pack
Of twenty cigarettes. And not by chance.
Serious heists, in fact.
Conclusive evidence
Of mischievous poltergeists.

Tom Billsborough

Inventor

Yes, the polyvinyl statue was his queen:
The last perfection of his passive dreams
To be the composite of all the virtues
Ever known or learnt. At last complete!
A highly polished virgin cast within this room,
This swaddled studio, the birthplace of his doom.
'We cannot let her multiply, my friend.
I must destroy the mould! '
Sadly he died before it met its end.

Yes, the polyvinyl statue was his queen,
For which a hundred models gave their glands,
Their bones, a sulky smile, the blonde cascading locks,
An over-rigid pose
And other features best described in prose.
I had no wish to immolate the mould,
Since many hundred copies sold
Would pay for my retirement..
My passive queen... so innocent..
My source of wealth untold!

Tom Billsborough

It's Turnip Head The Troll Again!

Hey! Ho! The TROLL is back
I think it is a Chimpanzee
Sitting in its little corner
Chomping on an old banana.
Oh dearie me
I shouldn't laugh
At inadequate psychopaths
But really you are so pathetic.
I pay no heed to things numeric
So please crawl back into your hole
Or maybe one day it's your soul
That gets a deserving score of ONE.

Tom Billsborough

Japan's Glory

Cherry blossoms float
Upon a cool April breeze
In sunlight pale as snowflakes!
Japanese haiku.

Tom Billsborough

Jealousy

So, I'm alone while she is with her spouse.
I, in pain, she in her soft warm bed...
And, whilst in torments I in nettles toss..
She, in his arms, remains so calmly nude:
That worthless man who holds her and whose dead
Touch she suffers, being the less robust,
And violates our love by this bond unjust
Which human law and not divine has made.
O holy law to all but me most just...
You punish me when she alone betrayed!

Tom Billsborough

Jean Et Jeanne

You wish to know the name
Of this low ruined house.
It is called John and Joan
In some other land.

When high winds pass
Its doorstep where nothing
Sings or appears.

It is John and Joan,
And from their grey faces
The day's plaster falls.
Again I see the window pane
Of ancient summers.
Do you remember them?
Far off the most shining,
The arch daughter of shadows.

Today, this evening,
We shall light a fire
In the great hall.
Then we shall depart
And let it live for the dead.

Tom Billsborough

Jewel Lady

Her ruby lips and
Sapphire eyes respond to praise.
Nurture her always.

Tom Billsborough

June Nights - Victor Hugo

In Summer, day over, the sweet flowering plain
Pours out afar its sensuous odour.
Eyes closed, ears half open to every refrain
We only doze gently in a transparent slumber.

The stars are purer, the shade seems pleasanter.
A hazy half-day tints the eternal dome
And the sweet pale dawn, awaiting her hour
On Night's lower lip seems to hover and roam.

Tom Billsborough

Klimt

Picture Judith, sensuous dissembler,
Damask dress half-open, diaphanous allure,
Eyes half-closed, lips parted beyond surrender,
Orgasm's smile and sorrow.

Tom Billsborough

Lacking Inspiration

The Spirit drips so golden from the Still.
Persistent as a beating heart.
Oh that my words would learn the part
To be as constant as my will
To write.

Some days I look upon a page
My mind as blank, with no desire
To raise a spark to light the fire
No phrases can I forage.
O dark night.

Tom Billsborough

Lady From Reading

There was a young Lady from Reading
Who went very well with the bedding.
As soft as a cushion
She even spoke Russian.
So we said Da..Da at the wedding

Tom Billsborough

Lament Of Mr. Greedy Chops

Lettuce pray and salads we praise
We carnivores must mend our ways.
Boil up the rice and beans
And lots of tasteful greens.
Our Juicy steaks must be allowed to graze.

Tom Billsborough

Landscape

Opening... this field of Olives
And, like a fan, closing.
Over the olive-grove
A deep sky,
Dark rain of cold stars.
By the river's bank,
Reeds and the darkness tremble.
Rippling... this grey air.
The Olive trees are full of shrieks.
A flock of captive birds
Which move their long tails
In the shadow.

Tom Billsborough

Le Chat Et La Chatte

Le chat et la chatte,
L'un a quatre pattes,
L'autre aux talons aiguilles.
Tomas et Lucille.

Ils sortent ensemble
Leur appartement mouille
Quel pagaille!
Mais on essaie, on essaie.
Ce n'est pas l'endroit
Ou elle a perdu son âme.
Sa flamme vivante
Autrefois si grande.

Non, c'est ici...
Le long des rues Parisiennes.
Par nuit, par nuit, la chatte comme le chat
Est de patrouille
Au son rythmique des talons aiguilles.

Le chat poursuit ses sentiers connus,
Cherchant les poubelles des Bistros fermes
Mais pour la chatte c'est le bordel
Toujours ouvert, prêt a recevoir
Les graines de désespoir!

Le matin, cependant, apporte la chaleur.
Les deux amis endormis dans leur lit.
Elle s'éveille et elle caresse le chat.
« Ah, Ici, mon ami, je suis le chat..
Et tu es la chatte.... »
Comme ils se joindre dans leurs rêves sublimes.
Et Elle sourit.

Tom Billsborough

Le Petit Doigt Qui Parle

PERE

« Tu as droit à une repose bien mérité,
Fais de beaux rêves, ma fille de bébé,
Et quand le jour se lève. Soit heureuse.
Tu seras bien rafraîchie, ma précieuse. »

JEUNE FILLE

« Je suis endormie et en paix
Mais me chante une autre chanson gaie,
Papa, s'il vous plaît,
Ou me dire un conte de fées! »

PERE

« J'ai chanté six déjà et ma gorge est sèche,
Et aussi quatre contes, et mèche. »

JEUNE FILLE

« Oh papa, je pensais que tu m'aimais »
Et elle se mit à pleurer...

PERE

« Ok, ok aussi une chanson gaie »

JEUNE FILLE

Et aussi un conte de fées? »
Dans une voix très pathétique
Lui donnant un sourire angélique!

PERE

Ok ok aussi un conte de fées.
Et quand je l'ai terminé
Tu peux compter les brebis.
And puis tu vas dormir! Oui?

Tom Billsborough

Le Portrait D'un Saint

Ma foi! Mon chat!
Il dort toujours
Etendu sur le tapis devant le feu
Passif comme un moine en prière!
Une telle vie passée glorieux
Lui a donné cet honneur.
Je suis témoin de la renaissance
D'un saint!
Ma foi! Mon chat!
Comment bien tu démontres
La puissance de paresse sans pareil
Et la sainteté de sommeil.

English Translation

My Goodness! My cat!
He's always asleep
Stretched out on the carpet in front of the fire,
Passive as a monk in prayer!
Such a glorious past life
Has given him this honour.
I am witnessing the rebirth
Of a saint.
My goodness! My cat!
How well you demonstrate
The power of laziness without equal
And the sanctity of sleep.

Tom Billsborough

Les Ballons

The blue lines of Alsace
And Lorraine! The rounded
Blues of hills sweep out
In many waves from bilberry
Meadows to the pale exteriors
Of finite space, suave
Elisions of the Frankish tongue.
How we long for such peace
To smooth away the jagged
Fears of conflict in our world,

Tom Billsborough

Les Clefs Perdues

Je me trouve dans de beaux draps
Chose catastrophique
J'ai perdu mes clefs encore.

Tom Billsborough

Let Not Tomorrow

Let not tomorrow be
The solar plexus of sorrow.
There must be answers
To strife causing poverty
And the crisis of refugees.
Let us learn to speak to each other
To answer these needs
Or the seeds of sorrow
May spread like soot
And blacken our own tomorrows.

Tom Billsborough

Life Class

Does she wonder what they see in her?
Geometries of planes and curves,
Belly, breasts, jaw-line, ears
Faithfully transferred to paper
The angles, creases, hollows
Mapped as by a cartographer
But with perspective's
More demanding strictures?

Or is their focus greater?
Do some purport to draw that inner soul
The me in me, she wonders.
Brows stencilled with her frown.
Her grey eyes hinting shadows
Sad memory
Her lips tight drawn
As the onset of poverty.
Some may flail for symbols
Reality is all to those who think they know.

.
Or perhaps she thinks of none of these.
Perhaps her mind is dwelling in a nest
Or ordinariness: her shopping list,
A lover's date tomorrow,
Her economic worries,
Seeds for her sparrows
Old songs echoing through her brain.
This hard stool!
My bottom's getting sore.
A sly glance towards the clock.
Jeez. Another hour and more!

I look at her and wonder
If she actually knows I'm here!
And if so, what she sees in me.

Tom Billsborough

Light Breeze

Is never ever never?
I on my western
You on your eastern shore,
Mine the sunset, yours the dawn,
Colour the grey expanding waters of time.
Light breeze, sea breeze,
Stirring up desire, the melting waves.
Call up you features, your image
Clearer and worth far more
Than any sight, experience, I know.
Is never ever never, love?

Tom Billsborough

Lindisfarne

On the last day of August, his feast is still observed
Aidan, Saint of Lindisfarne, bringer of the word.
Bearer of the torch on that Northumbrian shore,
Which twice a day and for six hours or more
Becomes an island refuge and its rocky core
Holds fast the remnants of his cathedral there.
And Lindisfarne the singers, a song of theirs I know
Based on a tale of terror by Edgar Allan Poe.
I don't recall the name of that particular song
But it's all right now for it won't be long
before I get the picture. The house of Usher
Fell, the effect of psychotic behaviour.
St Aidan's love was never set in stone
His fame endures though his house is mostly gone.

Tom Billsborough

Lola

Below the orange-tree
She washes cotton clothes.
Her eyes are green.
Her voice a violet hue.

Ah! Love below
The blossoming orange-tree.

The water sparkles
Flowing with the sun
In the olive tree
A sparrow is chirping.

Ah! Love below
The blossoming orange-tree.

Later as Lola
Has finished her soaping,
The young toreros come.

Ah! Love below
The blossoming orange tree.

Tom Billsborough

Lost Cultures

The wave crescendo breaks with a roar
Upon the outstretched carrion shore,
Which catapulted foam below the Moon's
Quick metronome and wilful winds
Devours, claiming the land's inheritance.
Rock and sand slide into inconsequence.
Cultures swept away before this fury.
What remains a mere archaeology,
Processed and reduced without remorse
By Time's dissolving intercourse.

Tom Billsborough

Lost Love

Sweet as a flute.
Soft as the peach blossom falls.
Her song recalls
Her first lost love
Who once upon his lute
Accompanied her, her soul,
Under these blossoming boughs.
Will she remain for ever
In her yesterday?

Tom Billsborough

Love At First Sight

Her eyes speak first of love
Her lips begin to move
Half-parted but retain
The immanence of silence.
The mute refrain
Repeated in the downward glance
A blush's dalliance.
If words are spoken
They may break the spell
Of our compliance.
It is well
To pause, absorb the mutual signals,
The immanence of silence,
The mute refrains, the precious moments.

Tom Billsborough

Love Is Like A Sausage

Love is like a sausage.
It has a slender skin.
It sizzles when you prick it.
It darkens when you SIN!

Tom Billsborough

Love Life

Love Life and not the shadow
Stalking you below,
Its blind obedience deceives,
As histories do,
Concealing its intent
To govern your tomorrow.
Study the clouds as they perform their sculptures,
The subtle greys chiselling the pure marble
And the light's pale ochre.
Seek the jasmine nebulae
And the rare orchid by a rocky shore
Touch to possess the magic of hair and flesh.
Nothing soothes more than a mutual caress.
Smell lavender and meadowsweet,
And the wild garlic
Pause a while to taste the saline samphire.
Listen to melodious stream,
Its complex rivulets between the rocks
Echoing a fugue or cello suite by Bach,
So aptly named!
Love life and not your shadow,
Fill your senses with Immediate things,
Not the false concepts of origins.
Or the doctrine of sin.

Tom Billsborough

Love Makes The World Go Flat

Love makes the world go flat,
Sparkling seascapes sweeping out
From rolling downs of wide horizons.
Shimmering skies absorbing eyes.
And the orisons of a lone lark
Suspended overhead signal
Our desire and hope to gather in
The supportive silence.
We grow like giant statues
In our love, so tall, so motionless,
In our embrace.

Tom Billsborough

Ma Normandie

Dark winged dreams, encircle me
As sleep alights upon my eyes
And bring a lullaby or two
To banish pain.
Or let her sing that song again
Of swallows that return in Spring
To Normandy... Ma Normandie!

Tom Billsborough

Make Music

Compose a lyric. Make it sing.
The corset driven verse has gone.
The birds are calling one to one.
Let our music now take wing.

Tom Billsborough

Man From Limerick

There was a man from Limerick
Who figured a poetic trick
He'd create a verse
With lines quite terse.
I'd say he was taking the Mick!

Tom Billsborough

Marriage

The bride wore a shroud
What imagery.
The groom was a tree.
Longevity
Of Marriage?
Who can predict our destiny?

Tom Billsborough

Martin Luther King

He had a dream, the man of truth and peace,
Man-mountain of a speech, so full of grace,
His wondrous words resounding even now
That justice will be found for all somehow.
His voice as clear as welcome wedding bells
To urge us to a communion of souls,
To stand before the altar of his love.
So let us join our hands and move
Together to the music of his soul.
We must not fail
To let each man and woman find a place
Deserving of their worth, not race.
He was a poet of the brightest hue.
He had a dream. Let us make it true.

Tom Billsborough

Mary Loves Her Lamb

Mary had a little lamb
She had it with Mint Sauce.
and everywhere that Mary went
It didn't come, of course.

Tom Billsborough

Master Chef

Damsons on the boil.
Jam the object. Missed a trick
Made a damson BRICK!

Tom Billsborough

Me And My Goats

Evening comes, my goats. Go home replete.
I'll rest a while to stir this nest of flames
And breathe upon the embers of my dreams.
The sparks still rise for me to contemplate
And rhythms form in subtle, smoky curls.
I need to sing before the fire fails.

Evening comes. My goats go home... replete.
I huddle in my coat of wool and smile
To hear your cadenced bleats in single file
Resound as you tread down towards the lower gate,
The slopes of chamomile and thyme, so deep
And thick with scent and softer than my sleep.

Tom Billsborough

Meadowsweet

Meadowsweet in full flower
Scent of vanilla
Perfume enriching evenings.

Tom Billsborough

Medea

Obsidian eyed, and shaped by fire,
Medea enchanted with awesome power
To make men tower
Like heroes or like fools, fall.
As Jason will recall,
Who paid a deadly price for his ambition.
It was a vice which seemed a virtue
To the Argonauts he led upon his expedition
To claim the Golden Fleece,
And claim Medea's love and bring her home to Greece.
Her sacrifice for love was great,
Her fate to lose her homeland
By her treacherous acts forever,
Her regrets compounded by the life
He gave her as reward
For furthering his cause in Colchis,
Her free and wanton life on perpetual pause,
Chained to the household duties of a Grecian wife,
A virtual slave despite her status.
First in Iolchos as their queen,
And now in Corinth too, deemed outcast
And barbarian from the Black Sea's eastern coast.
And there was worse to follow!
A callous act by Jason
To cast her off to further his ambition
By marrying the daughter of King Creon,
Gaining alliance to the royal house of Corinth.
And then the hypocrite, with bland sang-froid,
Claimed, as his reason, to secure their future,
Hers and her sons also, to nurture
Them by his increase of position and power.
'You jest, ' she cried in scorn
'And you shall learn it is not wise
To let a woman know she's second best.'
As soon he would discover,
As would her new supplanter, Glauce,
Who found Medea's gift of golden robes
Seasoned with a poisonous surprise,
And writhed in the last throes of agony,

Her hideous death now shared by Creon
Too as he attempted a despairing rescue.
Medea maddened with revenge,
Completed it by killing both their sons,
Her leaving gift for Jason's hubris,
A final savage nemesis.

Tom Billsborough

Meditation

The Lotus Sutra

Chant persists in waves to wash
Away o'er-reaching self
How sweet the calm of nothingness
Absolving silence!

Tom Billsborough

Meet The Boastfuls Part Five

My GRANDpa for a betting joke
Downed eighty cans of fizzy COKE
His wife of only 22
Swears to GOD it's true
Her nose grows longer as we talk.

Tom Billsborough

Meet The Boastfuls Part Four

You've heard of ol' Babe Ruth,
but guys let's have the truth.
I may well be blind
But I think you'll find
I slugged more runs forsooth.

Tom Billsborough

Meet The Boastfuls Part Seven

My Mary had a little Lamb
It pushed her in her little Pram.
Read War & Peace so darn quick
It really was a clever dick
So I turned it quickly into SPAM.

Tom Billsborough

Meet The Boastfuls Part Six

I went to see the POPE at home.
HE has this chateau thing in ROME.
And was he full of glee
To have an audience with me.
They call me GOD where I come from.

Tom Billsborough

Meet The Boastfuls Part Three

My three year old called Ben
Has a reading age of ten
He started writing Sagas
While composing several operas
And a portrait now and then.

Tom Billsborough

Meet The Boastfuls Part Two

'A two year old phenomenon
My Billy's run a marathon'
'My Sue has walked up Everest.
Just in her pants and vest,
And she is only one.'

Tom Billsborough

Meet The Boastfuls... Part One

'Oi, CAREful with THAT stethoSCOPE.
It's COLD upon my CHEST, you poor DOPE.'
MIDWIFE LET OUT shriek
(never HEARD new-born speak.
'Oh, GOD, ' she cried: 'I cannot COPE! '

Tom Billsborough

Meeting Mr Sparrow

"Am I safe? " he squeaked.
"Yes, Purry's fast asleep.. BUT
My advice. Don't cheep! "

Tom Billsborough

Memories

Candle-light and its whispers of shadows,
Smoke is raising its halos
And the tallow flows
Into the hollow below.
The droplets are falling like seconds of time
Down the once smooth candle sides.
And the rondeaux of memory now rekindle
In melodious silence echoes of music,
As we continue evolving
New formats preserving
Our conceptions of Time.

Tom Billsborough

Mercury

A small black ball rolls
Across that great red sphere..
Transit of Mercury!
Myth's wing-heeled wonder.
By time lapse alone earns
The right to be called
God's speedy messenger!

Tom Billsborough

Message For Our Poetess

Laughter and verse make a merry old couple.
So sing out with joy and blow away trouble
There's the taste of champagne in a sparkling rhyme
It bubbles along and it don't cost a dime
To make people smile
And feel good for a while.
So let's not be serious all of the time.

Tom Billsborough

Metamorphoses

Leaves become sparrows,
Sparrows leaves;
Metamorphoses of shadows
In the elders to the east.
Ahead the sun descends behind
A grill of tall ash trees.
Where on a single branch
The last two leaves splay fingers,
Downwards in surrender
To oncoming winter.
The sun slips slowly westward
Behind the tapered juniper
Studding it with stars.
And suddenly gives me
My early Christmas Tree!

Tom Billsborough

Metrical Dance

Come, sweet stranger, follow my steps.
Tis a metrical dance we must progress.
The band is playing and our two hearts beat
In perfect time, and our feet
Trace out in exact rhyme
The figures of eight and the swirling turns.
Closer and closer our bodies unite
And love will decide our ultimate fate
Let not its rhythm ever abate
That Chance may close this immortal dance.

Tom Billsborough

Midsummer Festival

Fetch two wheels of straw
Bound to seasoned wood.
Place one upon the bonfire,
Stacked high along the shore.
Take one towards the mound
With ancient piles aligned
Around the altar stone
To channel and confine
Dawn's pencilled light.
Collect protective herbs:
Sweet-scented thyme for sleep
The feathery leaves of mugwort
To ease sore feet;
The purple spikes of betony
To cure a sorcerer's curse;
Cardamine hirsuta
Whose fine ballistic seeds
Bring energy, and create
A fruitful field of dreams.
The Leaves of rampant nettle,
For nurturing our growth;
Where butterflies emerge
To briefly spread their wings;
Stoop down to pick plantago
To guide uncertain faith □
Gather scented mayweed
To salve a maiden's ills;
Malus use for cleansing out
Obsessive fears and acts.
The aniseed of fennel brings
Foresight, clearer sight.
Cast these herbs into the flames.
And may their mingled ash
Transport us to a better life
And bring us peace this year,
At this Midsummer's Eve,
The Goddess reigns supreme,
And symbolising this, the women
Cut a lock of hair

From each her serving man
And cast it in the fire.
How long we celebrate with
Games and dance and song
Throughout Midsummer's Night,
The coming of the sacred dawn
We stand upon the mound
Where sacred stones align
Around the altar catching
The pencilled light of Dawn.

Tom Billsborough

Mignonne

Sweet love, let's see now if the rose
Which, this morning, did disclose
Its crimson robes towards the sun
Has this evening, more or less,
Retained its folded crimson dress,
Its subtle hues to match your own.

Alas! See how a little while,
My sweet, has shed its beauties in a pile
Upon the ground below.
Oh! Truly cruel Mother Nature!
Since the rose can count its future
Just from morning till the evening now.

So, if you listen, sweetest lover,
Whilst your youthful looks may flower,
Their freshest newness on parade,
Gather, gather in your youthfulness,
For, as this flower, relentless
Age will make your subtle beauty fade.□

Tom Billsborough

Mind Games

The mind patrols like Time
In its relentless progress,
Librarian of our memories,
Our daily acts, deciding which
To catalogue and which forget,
But also acts as editor
Who may rewrite the scripts
Of our experience,
Over-riding consciousness.
And what of dreams? I sometimes
Think the mind decides to play
Its games while we're asleep,
Juxtaposing images for fun
In a new surreal way.
And so would I if I was
In control instead of he!

Tom Billsborough

'Miniature Rose'

This bush of red roses.
Ten feet tall,
Sweeps down to the ground,
Like a ball gown it swirls,
Sequined with diamante,
Of white jasmine flowers,
Sharp as the eyes of elves!
Dress fit for the Goddess
To whom I surrender,
My glorious Madonna.
And beyond the green meadows,
The organ pipes rising
And the rooks taking flight
Like a raucous young choir.
This is my church, cathedral
And chapter. I am immersed,
Am conscious as water.
My senses are flowing
And my faith is in Nature.

Tom Billsborough

Miniature Rose Bush

Purple discs of clematis
Twine the red rose
Stars of white jasmine between.

Tom Billsborough

Mirabeau Bridge

Under Mirabeau bridge
There flows the Seine.
And what of my dreams?
Will they appear again
In fragments of persistent rain?
Or flow forever to anonymous seas
Never to return to me?

Tom Billsborough

Miracles

A Cock laid an egg.
A leader kept a promise.
Miracles happen

Tom Billsborough

Misadventure

Princess kisses toad.
Toad turns into beautiful girl.
She shoudda checked first!

Tom Billsborough

Moaning Lisa

The black cloud came wearing a skirt
She wasn't too pretty or too pert.
I focused on her scowl
And said with a low growl
A smile in a while wouldn't hurt

Tom Billsborough

Monsieur Purry

Ses yeux foncés m'arrêtent
C'est toujours le même
Je m'amollie comme la cire
Et lui donnant un sourire bête
Mes paroles expirent.
Et ce matin aussi, C'est ça!
Comme tous les autres
Je deviens l'esclave d'un chat!

Tom Billsborough

Moon Magic

A fully rounded Moon appears
And to its cyclic motion
The girls are wedded, stirred to action
Circling now the altar stone
And mimicking the waves
With limbs' hypnotic grace
And casting flowery foam
Upon its moonlit face,
The ultimate attraction.

Tom Billsborough

Moonbeams

Merry moonbeams glide
Surf the deciduous tide
Falling leaves of foam.

Tom Billsborough

Moonlit Night

This Autumn night
There will be moonlight in Fuchow,
And there she will gaze alone,
With the children now asleep,
So deep in their innocent dreams
And thinking of me in Changan.
Her black hair wet with the Autumn dew
And her jade pale arms,
Chilly with the cold:
When, Oh, when
Shall we be together again,
Standing side by side at the window,
Looking at the moonlight with dry eyes.

Tom Billsborough

Moon's Music

Upon the shore I hear
The Moon's great orchestra
The stars a distant choir
As you command this constant ebb and flow
This fugue renewing in the hollow
Halls of Evening
As the waters concentrate to do your bidding.
Oh, what rapture, witnessing your power
Emanating from your pale exterior
Your light touch leading
Like a great conductor. □

Tom Billsborough

Morning

Was it not I who once had happy,
Heroic and legendary youth
To be inscribed in leaves of Gold?
By what crime, which error
Do I merit my present weakness?
Those of you who claim that beasts
Utter sobs of anger, that sick men
Despair, that the dead have bad dreams
Try to recount my fall and my sleep.
I can no better account for myself
Than the beggar with his continual
Paters and Ave Marias.
I no longer know how to speak!
Yet today, I believe that I have
Finished the account of my hell,
Truly hell, in the old fashioned sense,
Where its gates were opened by the Son of Man.
From the same desert, on the same night,
My tired eyes waken to the silver star,
Not stirring the king of Life, the three Magi,
The heart, the soul, the mind.
When shall we go beyond these shores
And mountains to hail the birth of new labour,
Wisdom, the flight of tyrants and demons,
The end of superstition to worship..
For the very first time.. Christmas on Earth?
The song of the heavens, the march of peoples.
Oh Slaves, let us not blaspheme Life!

Tom Billsborough

Morning Tide

The sea at morning
Sparkles with a million spears,
The army of the waves advancing,
To regimental orders.
Remorselessly arising
At my command
And dying at my feet,
Which beat the sliding sand.

Tom Billsborough

Mr Clumsy Strikes Again

"I note that you have lost your smile.
In fact you look quite sad.
You've been like that for quite a while.
I hope it's nothing bad.

"Well, actually, old chum, it's this
I wasn't in a rut.
I know that you did intend to miss
But you're standing on my foot!"

Tom Billsborough

Mr Purry Goes Shopping

Purry cat went out to do the shopping
He thought it would be topping
To go and try his luck
And buy some Peking duck
The piece he bought was whopping!

Tom Billsborough

Mr Purry Goes To Town

Mr Purry went to town
With his knickers hanging down.
He'd do owt for half a crown.
Naughty Mr Purry.

Tom Billsborough

Mr Purry Has A Complaint

You have no right
To call me "La Chatte";.
That's rude as you very well know.
Okay, I go
Out at night
And you never know where.
But what do I care?
By day it's my Fate
To muse and meditate
Upon my favourite chair.
Do I call you a "Tom";
When you go out all day
And come back all gasping and grey?
No, I call you my slave.
So please behave
And no more of that.
Remember that I'm the top cat!

Tom Billsborough

Mr Purry Meets Her Maj

To London town my cat has gone
To see the Queen upon her throne
She's been on it for sixty year
So constipated, the poor old dear.

Tom Billsborough

Mr Purry Plays Cluedo

It was just like Cinderella,
From Kitchen to the Ball,
And Purry sent Miss Scarlet
With a skilful flick of tail
Scuttling from penury to glory.
Sadly for this history,
There was no handsome Prince
For she never found her groom
She ended up the guilty girl,
With Wrench in Billiard Room!

Tom Billsborough

Mr Purry Supervises Tom's Cafe

The Cafe door is open. It's open every hour.
The menu is quite varied, all you could desire.
And every passing customer
Is greeted with a cheer.

And what is more, the food is free.
That's true, I make no charge.
Such welcome generosity
My largesse extra large!

My usual guest is Whitey Paws
Who really was quite fey.
As at my glance, she'd raise her nose
And promptly run away.

But yesterday, the thing turned round
We stared at one another.
She paused a mo. But stood her ground
And cleaned the ruddy platter.

My cat, meanwhile, who meditates
Upon his luxury chair
Is not inclined to speculate
Who wanders through the door.

He only moves... and mighty quick
When she tries to push her luck.
He wouldn't let the beggar nick
His precious Peking duck!

Tom Billsborough

Mr Purry's Gone Away

Mr Purry's gone away...
I saw him bounding down the lane.
It only seems like yesterday
Responding to his name.

Will you not come back again?
Will you not come back again?
Better loved you cannot be;
Will you not come back again?

Mr Purry's gone away...
He used to steal my daughter's chair.
It only seems like yesterday
So resolute as he stayed there.

Will you not come back again?
Will you not come back again?
Better loved you cannot be;
Will you not come back again?

Mr Purry's gone away...
He purred just like a motor car
It only seems like yesterday
I tickled him behind each ear.

Will you not come back again?
Will you not come back again?
Better loved you cannot be;
Will you not come back again?

Tom Billsborough

Murali

A flute of black bamboo,
Murali calls and Time itself must freeze.
As flowers bend their ears
Strong winds relent,
Become a gentle breeze
And the cow-girls from the pastures
Gather round in gentle rapture
To hear your melodies.
Oh Krishna, fill our empty souls
With joy, they cry. Nor is the cobra,
poised to strike, immune.
It cannot harm, when held within
The charm of this oblivion.
Oh, Krishna, play your tunes of love!

Tom Billsborough

Musical Interludes

When I play my keyboard music
Mr Purry goes ballistic
He tries to climb aboard
As I grind out each chord.
It's truly CAT-astrophic!

Tom Billsborough

Muteness.

To the abattoir send your useless words,
Insatiable forms, boneless fruits,
Voids decorated with illusions,
Hides inflated with mist.
May muteness descend into the pit of your tongue,
May the taste of eternity grant you peace of mind,
That the cross on which you nail definitions
Crumble to dust.
Only then, like a saint's sculpture
Polished by kisses of believers,
Your mouth can pour words comparable to suns.
They will not be yours, born of a humble throat.
They will have letters, sounds, shapes,
But this time fertile with a pregnancy
That bursts into chanting,
Cathedrals of perpetual growth, gigantic
Dictionaries peopled countless times
By a solitary 'thanks'.

Tom Billsborough

My Brother's Seascape

Muted tones bring peace
As the green sward breathes out□
Towards the ochre sands
And the steel-blue sea beyond,
So calm at the tide's turn!
The curved horizon bends
Below small clouds
Which pose no threat of rain.
There is a stillness here
Wherein my dream may make
A song with muted melodies,
Echoing the pleasure I receive
From an unpretentious art.
Yet am I soundless as the owl's flight
In seeking for the words
Within this peaceful space.

Tom Billsborough

My Miniature Roses

A hundred roses still in flower!
Someone should tell them it's time to rest!
After all it is December.
And this is not Australia.
Their rosy lips can still digest
The watery sunlight from the west
And buds upon the chorus line
Are dreaming of a future time
When they will play the starring role,
Before the frosty curtains fall,
Curtailing their endeavour.
With Christmas just three weeks away,
I think the buds will have their day,
With many roses still in flower!

Tom Billsborough

My Ode To The Arts

Leonardo's lines and Titian's colours
Sing out as arias from an opera,
Or a pirouette of the great Pavlova,
Taking your heart into those realms unseen,
Into the reality of dreams.
The Saint John's Passion soars
Aloft and so becomes vast arches
For the Cathedral of Rheims.
In Art the structure matters,
Rhyming like counterpointed feelings
Giving substance to our being.
And ancient myths a new expression,
Or celebrate the joy of living,
Or the tragedy of human errors
In Sophocles and in King Lear
They paint the road to ruin.
Which medium we use is interwoven
With strands of other Arts we know
We cannot stop the inter-flow
Of memories and of our learning.
Our path is coloured by our aptitude,
And only varies by the outer form
Permitted by its latitude.
Verse is what I choose and yet I celebrate
All other Arts and chiefly that of Nature
Whose sounds and sights and scents give pure
Ideas and dreams to contemplate.

Tom Billsborough

My Universe

My Life began with you.
My Love is constant as a flock of stars
Winging from that primal nest
Of Light's explosion
And fanning out to fill my Universe.
How well that great compulsion
Gathers in primordial dust
Of true attraction
Subdues conditional being
Into this intensity sharing
Our togetherness,
And forms in stars
Bright memories and joys!

Tom Billsborough

My, Was She Merry

Helen B. Merry

Drank oceans of sweet sherry
From Cork to Derry.

Tom Billsborough

Naiads Bathing

Around the nuclei of polished stones
The Naiads spin and wash their hair
And fill the air with gentle laughter.
They dive below and shimmer
In the folding light like ivory ghosts,
And gliding to and fro
They flow with supple grace
Becoming also water.
But then they reappear,
with slender arms upraised
And wildly splash each other,
Their voices echoing with tinny laughter,
And once again
Around the nuclei of polished stones
The Naiads spin and wash their hair.

Tom Billsborough

Naked

Fur coat, no knickers,
That's my cat, that's Purry
Who knows no hurry.

Tom Billsborough

Narcissus Speaks

By this still pond, I saw a nymph
Rising towards me from the water's depths.
Her lips were parted and mine also
As I reached over to respond.
But as we drew near
Her face would fade below,
The pale jade water
As I remained above
Pining again for my unrequited love.
I cried for her but only heard
A mocking echo from the distant rocks,
Repeating every utterance I made
These notes now out of tune with my desire
Bringing discord to my ears.
I fast.
And am now pale as grass
In a hot parched June
My pulse is failing and I fade away,
And since I stay,
my breath slows down
In this soliloquy of death.

Tom Billsborough

Naughtyfid- O

Oh, Naughty Fid-O,
Woof, woof woof, woof, woof.
The site's gone mad again.
Just doesn't do its stuff.

Oh, Naughty Fid-O
You're in the dog house now
We can't get any messages
So watch out for a row!

Oh, Naughty Fid-O
Arf, arf, arf, arf, arf.
We'll get no explanations
Ain't life just a larf.

Tom Billsborough

Neglected Garden

That fine day, the wind called to my heart
With the sweet smell of jasmine
"And for this fine aroma
Give me a scent of roses."

"I have no roses now.
No flowers in my garden grow
All of them have died."

"Then I'll remove the weeping
Of the fountains,
The yellowed leaves
And the withered petals too."

The wind then fled
And my heart bled
Oh Soul, what have you done
To neglect your garden so?

Tom Billsborough

New Beginnings

The tailless serpent wakes,
Its vast flanks quake,
Flexing its muscles.
Newly adorned, its bright scales
Glisten as the Dawn scatters its seeds.
The Moon reaps with rhyming waves
As they rear towards me.
Predication of dreams!
The sea insinuates
Its sibilant language
Around our heaving cables
And our passive bows.
We should be elsewhere
But we choose to stay
Within the matrix of our being,
Swaying within the immense womb.
It is our fate, our great compulsion,
To celebrate with anthems
This, our conscious being.

Tom Billsborough

New Birth

The Skull may laugh
But cannot cloud the mirror
With that all-consuming answer.
What did he know at the point of death?
That all was but delusion?
Or was his cry delayed
Until the sudden shock of his rebirth
And a new era for his penitent religion.

Tom Billsborough

New Life

To Chengtu in the South,
Now dispossessed of wealth,
An old man came,
Poor farmer now.
He sits with bitter sorrow
As he stares back to the North,
Yet finds oblivion from strife
Paddling his little boat,
Accompanied by his wife,
Watching their children
Bathing in the clear water,
And butterflies courting
One another and seeing
Two Lotus blossoms on one stalk together;
Taking tea later with his family,
Or else the pure juice of cane-sugar
And thinking how drinking
From plain crockery
Is as good as the finest jade.

Tom Billsborough

New Mown Play

the lawn has been mown.
Blackbirds cry: Dinner ready.
Worms come out for meal.

Tom Billsborough

Night Of The Full Moon

White night where the crystalline water
Sleeps in repose on the lake's bed
And which a full round moon has led
Its squadron of stars to watch over.

And a tall oak is reflected round
In the unrippling mirror. White night
In which the water cradles the light
Of the highest wisdom and most profound.

It is a remnant of Sky which Nature comes
To embrace in her arms. It is a tatter
Of Sky which has now come down.

And in the night's silence the prayers
Come from the lover resigned alone
To love, which is the only richness he bears.

Tom Billsborough

Nighthawks

Together and apart,
Encased in glass,
The candour of metallic light
The strangers are arranged around the bar
In separate loneliness,
Within this all night diner.
Six empty stools await
Their further ghosts
Who may or may not come to this charade.

Tom Billsborough

Nightmare

White sands and a blue lagoon,
The perfect dream, alone
And, as the actress said,
I wished to be alone.
The idyll didn't last for long
As dark dreams swooped in,
Bearing me off into another world,
A wrecked arrondissement
Of Paris, staggering past
Peeling posters of girls
Clad in gaudy underwear,
Shuttered shops with paint stripped bare,
Broken masonry here and there,
Neglect and decay imposing a terrible absence
And the desolation of desire,
Streets only fit for gang warfare
And the flitting shadows of malevolence.
And I alone in this hollow silence,
With mixed emotions,
Desperate for directions,
Yet fearful of the approach of strangers.
No one came. I was truly alone
In this crumbling maze of night
Yes, truly alone until the sobering sunlight
Quite suddenly dismissed the cloying nightmare.
I was left to wonder why my mind
Had conjured up the perfect peace of loneliness
And destroyed it with the loneliness of despair.

Tom Billsborough

No More Camping

One day,
My canvas tent,
It blew away.
I do not know to what ex-tent.
It briefly flapped like Hamlet's ghost,
Or mizzen sail,
Or some great sea-bird on the gale.
Camping was a sudden non-event.
A nearby stream now broke its bank
And I was stuck
And dank in clinging mud
Like some Jemima puddle duck.
That's why I left those poles apart,
And sodden sleeping bag.
I lit a fag
And then resolved to seek a life of leisure.
A great four-poster was my motto.
A warm bed leasuring my grotto,
And warmer ladies, to be sure.
Come on you Lizzies and you Sadies,
There's room enough for four.
No camping on a treacherous slope.
A horizontal dream is mine. And hope!

Tom Billsborough

No Notification

Who has read my verse?
Another P.H. curse.
It's gone real bad
And we are sad
Cos we can't get no...
We can get no..
No, we can get no..
NOTIFICATION
No! No! No!

My message is quite terse
Someone get a nurse
The site is feeling ill
And clearly needs a pill
Cos we can't get no...
We can get no..
No, we can get no..
NOTIFICATION
No! No! No!

Tom Billsborough

Nomination

Grand old Party piece.
Trump suits and will be let loose
Tigress sharpens claws!

Tom Billsborough

Northern Lights

Amber, turquoise, emerald lights
Like Courtiers cavort
Before the Princess of the night,
Who dons her diamond crown,
Reflecting dancing sequins
upon her velvet gown
Which, wave by wave, unfolds
At her command,
The unseen hand of genuine majesty,
Beyond the compass of the fading
Monarchies of tenuous heredity.

Tom Billsborough

Now Who's Been Nicking My Couch

The slouch is on my couch!
No, not me. It's Mister Purry.
I've been unseated, now defeated,
I face a loss of space.
I am bereft at this grand theft.
One can't endure the indignity of sitting in a chair.
It happened overnight. The sight
Of him pretending to be me now drives me batty.
Shall I be rude, intrude
And interrupt his sleep which seems suspiciously deep
(I'm sure I saw a flicker from that naughty nicker)
Or shall I call on God to oust this insolent person
(er sorry, couldn't get a rhyme, well not this time)
I can't do any more so lying on the floor
Is what I'm at with the patience of a cat.
A lesson learned is knowledge earned
I mutter as evilly I consider
Future plans to spike his guns.
A pile of books strategically placed would cook
His goose. I knew they'd be some use
One day instead of slouching in my Library!

Tom Billsborough

Nowhere

NOWHERE

Waiting is the death of Time
Living only when nothing's desired
And the moment its rose is scorned
It becomes an eternal seal.
We create our long footprints
Which are recorded nowhere at all
Space fails to birth its first place
Time is the solitary response
Where all questions must fall.

Tom Billsborough

Nursery Rhyme

Time for bed, my sweetie,
And, if you're really quick,
I'll read a lovely story
By Judith Blatherwick.

Time for bed, my sweetie,
And if you're really good,
I'll read about the Fairies
Of Pressmennan Wood.

Time for bed, my sweetie,
And when you fall asleep,
The fairies soon will visit you
If you promise not to peep.

Tom Billsborough

Oak Tree

Ancient as our dreams,
This tall oak of long endeavour,
Object of our deepest myths and sagas,
Within its thickened hide conceals
And written in concentric rings
Its memories of seasons
To be released alone at death,
When we ourselves may know
Our future or the end of myth.
Your golden leaves and acorns
Fall like many songs
As you now raise your splendid
Boughs to Paradise,
Being full of Faith and young.

Tom Billsborough

Ode To Aphrodite

Come, Aphrodite, from your Cyprian home,
By sparrow wings borne and instantly
Alight in this temple's cloister,
So sacred to you and your beauty.
Here orange groves welcome
And the altars on which
The frankincense smoulders.

Come, Aphrodite, to this pleasant bower,
Where streamlets murmur
Through fruit laden branches
And cascades of red roses o'ershadow
The ground and from the flickering leafage
Enchantment is settling below.

Come, Aphrodite, to these lush grassy meadows
Where wildflowers grow..
The poppy, the cornflower and bright marigolds
Where the breezes may comb
Softly your delicate hair.

Come, Aphrodite, a garland awaits you.
The nectar is mixed in goblets of gold.
Guest of our Fete, we ask you with pleasure
To pour the Libation
Which we will drink to your honour.

Tom Billsborough

Ode To Light

Light on the tongue,
Such a light word, light..
Yet full of power,
Its speed our ultimate measure
Bending round the Universal Spheres
To bring our histories.
A light touch lights the heart's fires
A light breeze seduces us
As the sweet sound of a distant choir.
A light voice commands the listening ear.
And how lightly in the morning, early
It so attaches to the dew
Its tiny globules of pure mercury,
Always the messenger!

Tom Billsborough

Ode To Time

Once absolute, now personal,
Time and belief.
Heretical, my eyes perceive
My colour and my shape for this leaf.
No boundaries exist
From the first catalyst,
That random word, the first breath
Of the songs that form
In my expanding universe,
Where Time has no life but no death.
What stars, what nebulae are given
To the best minds, the men of vision,
Replacing rituals, fake history
And our entropic memory
With heretical perceptions.

Tom Billsborough

Oh No.. Not Again!

What is it about cats and paper?
Right, I'm out on the lawn
Minding my own sweet
Business and reading this garbage
About illegal Immigration
And how it's ruining the Nation.
Almost on every page..
Would you credit?
I mean, come on, you twit,
My ancestors were Viking
And it was much to their liking
To rape and to pillage
Prioritizing priorities
And many a defenceless village
And then settle down, sit tight
On the land. No invite
You see! Well, that's history.
But back to the original story.

As stated before I'm on my own
Paper spread neatly across the lawn
When who should creep up
And lower its fat weight
Upon my late
If not lamented story,
Now buried beneath a clump of black fur.
The little beggar, it even
Has the cheek to purr
As though it's done me a favour.
It happens every time.
Guess I never learn!

Tom Billsborough

Olympics New Event

Litter rules O.K?
And Fly-tipping is the game.
Our National shame.

Tom Billsborough

On The Making Of Pearls

Coat the wound with nacre, layer upon layer,
Create your pearls of iridescent lustre.
I stand upon this headland wedge,
And wrapped within my songs,
I whisper softly in another tongue
The dream is knowledge.
I pass beyond these Saxon graves,
Cut in sandstone on the polished cliff
And amble down towards a church,
Itself more ancient than the graves
And far below I see
Another graveyard, a graveyard by the sea.
I think again of Valéry, his resting place,
His monumental verse of iridescent lustre,
Wrought layer by layer from the true conflict
Between being and becoming.
Again I think of pearls, the oyster using pain
To create its shining future.

Tom Billsborough

On The Subject Of Clocks

I am pulse, momentary man,
The motivated impulse
Unloading Time with the causal sanction
Of a clockwork response.
Tick, tock O, radio clock
Of my unconscious being.
And what I am seeing
Has passed, been processed,
And I held fast
In my mind's immediate past.

Tom Billsborough

On Watching Paint Dry

Watching paint dry is a pure conjecture
And, I might add, infinitely superior
To attending an Economics Lecture.
One morning, as I do recall,
We shuffled into the Lecture hall
And soon to drown out talk of Quantative easing,
Which I assume is a laxative cure
We raised our eyeballs to the ceiling
Counting the spots arrayed up there.
No doubt he thought his speech uplifting
Seeing us gaze at the heavenly spheres.
If we'd only been able, during that incredible lecture,
To watch some wet paint breathe out its moisture
And thrill to slow changes as it lightened its colour!

Tom Billsborough

Optical Illusion

It comes and goes
But never knows its name
In fact as far as it's concerned
It always stays the same.
In fact it isn't even there at all,
So needs no name.
Only recalled
As an occurrence to our eyes
Remotely beautiful,
A brief rose which soon discards its petals.
Its daily round is ours,
Its non-existence towers
Above us and greedily
Consumes our wonder
With its pretend presence.

Tom Billsborough

Orpheus In The Underworld

Do not look back.
Do not forget how
The ground glass of regret
Can choke the beauty of our music
As Orpheus ever lost
Eurydice at Hades' door
And the charmed heads
Of Cerberus awoke
To snarl once more
At the lost lovers.

Tom Billsborough

Out Of Control

And why this boat?
It's red prehensile sail
Gathering the wind
Careering on a reach
Beyond my sure control.
I am alone below a sallow sky,
Propelled to no purpose
Upon an endless sea.
I thought I saw you there
But dreams deceive.
You were my island once
But now alone to grieve
I feel no substance
And the deep horizon fades
As I am bound upon
The whims of ruthless tides.

Tom Billsborough

Pacific Days

Washing the barrier reef, the Coral sea,
Brings fresh nutrients to the coral blooms,
Chrysanthemums in splendour
Where fishes of deep orange, blue
Wide banded black and yellow
Flit without collision
Gingerly for shelter
From sharp marauding sharks,
Whilst dark brown turtles hover over them
Like passive guardian angels or dispassionate stars.
The shallow water here is a pale azure
The deeper cobalt merging into indigo
And stays so colour fast for a thousand
Miles and more as we sweep eastwards
To azure once again,
The pale waters and white shores of Vanuatu.
The vast Pacific now begins,
Wide as lovers' smiles, relays our dreams
Past islands with evocative names
Fiji, Tonga, Tahiti and Tuamotu
Avoiding the doldrums of our days
And finally to Chile and Peru.

The earth is mostly water. So are we.
Our nutrients flow round us too,
As those awash within the Coral sea.

Tom Billsborough

Past Remembered Loves

Passion welds complicit souls.

Brief Madrigals.

Part song, imparting momentary touch,
Notes strung out in beads of later solace.

Some high, some mellow,
Blending the alliance.

Brief Madrigal.

Part love, part song or parting song

Which memory reorders

Into a rondeau of requited being?

Airbrushing doubt

And smoothing out the discords.

Words rewind, allow retakes

Of what we meant to say

Brief madrigals of momentary bliss,

The monumental kiss,

The passion welding our complicit souls.

Oh, that too brief a Madrigal!

Tom Billsborough

Pebbles

Pebbles start ripples.
In rhyme's completed circles.
A single word can trigger
So many diverse tongues
A single moment
The expanding Universe.
A gentle kiss, light as a breeze
Creates waves throughout our being,
A small touch of friendship
Can be everlasting.
A small silence memories
Of one who passed away
For whom the waves of love
Continue from a pool of sorrow.

Tom Billsborough

Personae

Which is you and which your persona?
Do you really know, acting as you do
In different roles inhabiting new names?
How do we distinguish in your games
The fake image from the true soul?
And more importantly, how do you?
Is the mask a measure of immaturity
Or psychopath's measured response
To one of excessive faith
Who soon will fall into his pit of iniquity.
Or are you but an actor who inherits
Facets of his roles, a gesture or a turn of phrase
That merits his remembrance
And so becomes a composite by chance
Without insidious intent?

Tom Billsborough

Petunia

Princess Petunia, she rose in the night
Her pink, frilly nightie billowing out
A knock on the window, a rap, rap, rap, rap
Had caused her to have a terrible fright.

But just like those victims in those tales of horror
She stupidly decided to open the window.
In flew the count with his gleaming teeth bare
Delighted to see such a pretty blood donor.

He drank and he drank from her pretty white shoulder.
Whist she was a swooning and sighing with pleasure.
Two pints were enough to quench his great thirst
As she wilted and wilted and had quite lost her colour.

He looked most concerned as she swayed where he stood.
" Have I taken too much? You know what I'm like."
She replied with a sigh: " No, that's quite all right"
Mama always tells me it's good to give blood."

Tom Billsborough

Pink Corsets On Washing Lines

Tight corsets shape the mould
Folds of flesh are scraped
Into a new, unfriendly space,
Leading to an enhanced waist
And a shortage of breath.
And so it is with words,
In some contemporary modes,
Tight phrases squeeze the sense
But suffocate the music.
These are but cameos
Of a minor Art which soon will pass
Into a merited oblivion.

Tom Billsborough

Pinkas Synagogue

They had no sanctuary but this.
We pass into the rooms where every wall
Is etched with names, their dates of birth and death,
The latter closely packed in time
As the old graves in the nearby cemetery.
Surnames and initials red as blood,
The rest in black to symbolize their cruel end
Which brought their memories to this place of rest.
So many individual names, so many families,
None obliterates despite the 'Last Solution'.
Without the walls, the statues too,
Three children crouched in terror,
Writing men like skeletons reaching out in hunger,
Recall my impotence and anger.
Dear people, my brothers and my sisters,
Carted off like cattle to the Auschwitz abattoir.
I see them hover there in regimented lines
Between faint hope and deep despair,
Hearing the seductive sounds of the conscript orchestra.
As those about to die recall
The mocking irony of 'Arbeit mach frei'.
No, no, what makes us free is true respect
For a neighbour's faith, his colour and his race,
To offer sanctuary to those displaced by war or famine.
That's what makes us free and truly human.

Tom Billsborough

Planets Of The Peacocks

The song resumes and we must yield to love.
You know the rest, sweet Lady tenderness,
We orbit you, compelling femaleness,
We spin, by gravity compelled to move

Upon the pathways you alone can choose!
We strutting males compulsively parade
Our brilliant feathers fanning in charade
Our timorous egos wishing not to lose

The favour of the peahen watching near
With feigned disinterest until the choice is made
And to the applicants the news conveyed,
The losers, hooked off-stage, and shown the door.

No doubt we will resume the song of love
By gravity we spin, compelled to move.

Tom Billsborough

Plaster Work

An evening stroll along the path,
Venus rising from her daily bath
And just ahead an even lovelier sight,
Two moons arising in the pale moonlight,
A lady bending over in white pants.
I introduced myself with one intent
And following a very, very brief chat,
Suggested that I'd like a plaster cast of that!
She laughed and said: "You have an awful cheek."
"But you have two, " I answered. "They are sleek
And would sit nicely on my mantelpiece,
In the place of honour, if you please."
"I'll discuss it with my boyfriend in a while, "
She answered with a disengaging smile.
We went our separate ways, I'm sad to say.
The space has been reserved there to this day! "

Tom Billsborough

Poem Hunter Take Note

Oh, Poem Hunter what shall I do
I tried to leave a comment
But you say it isn't true.
Get it sorted quickly, as quickly as you can,
Tell us that your site
Ain't going down the pan!

Tom Billsborough

Poltergeists On The Move

If I became a ghost
I think I'd be a poltergeist
Playing silly jokes.
I've had some practice.
Once a friend of ours
Persisted in leaving her house unlocked.
Despite my wife's persuasive powers.
One day we passed her pad
And noticing her car not there
We had
A smart idea to stage a sudden raid.
"Back door's open, " my good lady said.
So in we crept like crafty housebreakers.
I lit a large cigar and smoked a bit
As she moved furniture around
And washed some pots
As our friend was in the habit
Of letting dust pile up upon her plates.
I stubbed out my cigar and let it rest
Upon an ashtray full of old cork tips
And changed the angles of a photograph or two.
"That will do, " we said as we admired our works
And quickly exited like a couple of real jerks.
The upshot of it was she figure out in minutes
Who'd been in her house. Amazing... innit?
She knew us well and wise to our last prank
She whizzed around and to be quite frank
Told us we were useless poltergeists.
And then she laughed so much
She nearly split her tights.
And yet our silly efforts weren't in vain.
She never left her house unlocked again!

Tom Billsborough

Pony Boy

It's Spring again, my Pony Boy,
Yet we are still apart,
My only comfort is I hope
You sing with birds
And share your passion
In the bright sunlight,
Astonished at the change of season!
For now, there is no-one to praise you
To call you my bright boy.
I reflect upon the places
We both of us enjoy;
The hills, the valley streams,
Beneath the trees
Beyond our garden gate;
But maybe best to fall asleep
To bring forgetfulness,
As the Kind sun warms
My aging back.

Tom Billsborough

Portrait Of A Lady

A shade in shadow, her face sallow,
Her lips tight drawn,
She sits alone
And glances through the window
At the corner of the bar.
Far distant thunder clouds
Compose a gathering storm
And the first drop of rain
Slides down the window pane.
A tear forms and then another
And reaching her decision,
She switches off the electricity of anger.
She rises from her seat
Into a loveless future, knowing
She has failed to countenance
This final act of his betrayal.
The rain begins to fall
As she heads home,
Now firm in her resilience.

Tom Billsborough

Posterity

Each instant with his pious oblivion, without becoming
Memory, dissolves into the fragrance of the void.
Though the world may nail its thousand axes in your mind,
There is within the depth of soul a sphere that does not spin.
Your held beliefs have crumbled, and reflect the same moon
In your every leaf.
Receive the promised port's aroma after a voyage through
A thousand chasms dressed up as whores.
Feel the child burn in your chest, watch it fall into
Millennial ashes,
Suffer the thrust of the wind with your eyes fixed on the sky
And your mind in rags.
Be now the reflection of what you have never been, so that the
Traces of your steps give dancing lessons.
Pockets full of eternal absence, in posterity's flesh sow
Lucid worms.
Let the world slip through your open hands, throw yourself at the precipice
turned into an apple.

Tom Billsborough

Prayer For All Refugees

In Waddecar woods
Where the wild garlics flower
And the bluebell choirs
Echo their arias.
I come for peace
To the same pool
In which are poured all streams of faith
Shall we not kneel upon the grass
To contemplate
And issue a prayer together,
Each in our own tongues
and according to our beliefs
For those displaced
By famine and by war?
And pray for the safety of those
Who dare the perilous seas
For the sake of themselves
and their families.
We have a duty of care
Let our hands and our hearts
Reach out to grant them
Refuge and hope for their futures.

Tom Billsborough

Problem Solving

It can be somewhat boring,
(As a power drill I mean)
When someone else is snoring
As a matter of routine.

I'm told there's one solution:
A bucket set high above
At the first sounds of commotion
It drip, drips on your love.

And if the sounds persist at all,
The Bucket slopes some more
To make a lovely waterfall
On the face that you adore.

One problem with this ruse, it's said
That when the deed is done
You end up with a soaking bed
And a spouse armed with a gun!

Tom Billsborough

Procrastination

Evening comes and Venus rises
With her bright accusing eye.
Why have you not sung to me today?
I hear her cry.
Do you have these days
When all you want to do
Is slope off into prose
Sending jokey e-mails to a daughter
Or a friend, or like me reply
In awe to my brother's accounts
Of strenuous hikes across the Lakeland fells?
Me? Well I bravely stagger to my car,
Occasionally. That's quite far
Enough to exercise my weary limbs.
And my meditation's due.
Oi you! This just won't do, I hear her call.
Oh, she knows me through and through,
You know. She ain't no fool.
She is my Goddess, after all.
Conscience is so cruel
But my response is slow.
So my cruel mistress gnaws
Through my frail excuses,
One by one, like munching
Through a layered burger on a plate:
I have no choice and surrender to fate
The cat needs grooming,
Friends are due to supper.
There's a programme that I just can't miss.
And the cat's annoyed
And is biting my big toe!
I could do a runner.
But wait a mo!
My pen's run dry and I have no other.
Is this my rescue by the famed seventh cavalry?
No, use your computer, I hear her sigh.
Ah well, you can't say I didn't try.

Tom Billsborough

Progress

Go slow! It's a built-up zone!
I'll say, I groan
As we crawl at five miles an hour!
Chug! Chug! Chug!
Goes my long-suffering motor.
Back to the caves, I say.
You know it only seems like yesterday,
When with a few friendly growls
We'd sit at the doors
Of our spacious caverns,
Chewing the fat and kebabs
From wild pig or dinosaur,
Laughing at that guy, Joe
Over there on his heels
Fiddling around
With some round things
He called wheels.
It'll never take on, we'd roar.
To be fair it was more like
Grunt, grunt grunt.
Well, you don't want words
When you hunt all day.
Quieter the better, I'd say.
What on earth you gonna use it for?
We'd jeer.
How wrong we were.
Yes, how wrong we were,
As I cried damn
as I sat out another long jam
Into the City centre,
Dreaming wistfully of yesteryear!

Tom Billsborough

Progress Through Meditation

Beyond the shadows of the cloistered walk
The quadrangle supports a sense of peace
Its one square lawn contains a pond
And marble fountain of eternal faith,
The bubbling waters bringing absolution.
And though I do not share the faith,
I share the precepts of redemption.
The fellows here explain their doctrines
With a quiet but a firm resolve
And I should follow mine to find
That inner reservoir of calm
Which we with sandaled feet encircle
In our progress round this cloistered walk
As fleeting shadows still in search of form.

Tom Billsborough

Prudence

There was a young maiden from Crewe
Who really got stuck in the glue.
For in that vicinity
She lost her virginity
Poor Pru for she grew and she grew.

Tom Billsborough

Purry Died Today

Upon this day of bitter sorrow
I see no dawning of tomorrow
For Purry died today.
Yes, Purry died today.

Oh, were I Orpheus with his lyre
To charm and make the Gods conspire
To bring him back again
To bring him back again.

There is no song. There is no sound
Since Purry lies below the ground
For Purry died today
Yes, Purry died today.

Tom Billsborough

Purry's New Bed

Let sleeping cats lie.
So mine lies on our table
Reading newspapers

Tom Billsborough

Putting One's Foot In It!

Gladys Moo! Gladys Moo!
I've stepped right in your pancake poo.
Oh, Gladys, O Gladys moo!
Oh, why can't you use the Loo
Oh Gladys, Oh Gladys Moo.
My feet are brown
I look a clown
And I'll be driven out of town..
Oh Gladys, Gladys Moo.
Toilet training that's for you.
Or you'll be Steak, so rare and true,
My Gladys, my Gladys Moo!

Tom Billsborough

Quartet

Song and moonlight, both of silver,
Echo as the sunset quits
This avenue of aspen trees,
Which gently shake their tremulous leaves,
And a nightingale begins to call
And the shy moon, emerging from the clouds,
Sends a cool rejoinder.
It is a courtship to remember
As we link hands and link the music
To the mirroring colour.

Tom Billsborough

Quicksands

Today the silence is suborned
By complicit undertones
Of treacherous quaking sands.
Unstable ground enshrouds your feet
And, with compelling power,
Now drags you down
Into its tight enclosure,
As though by unseen hands.
The distant tide has turned
And witnessing your distress,
Sweeps back across the bay
At fearful pace to join the action,
As we the curious who gather
At the scenes of accidents
Wondering who has died.
Now in your ears
An earlier warning rings..
Never cross the sands without a guide.

Tom Billsborough

Rainbow

The caves of cloud you parted
And resurrect the sky
Arch daughter of spectral light!

And joyful we must follow
Gather in our sight
Your abolishing power!

Tom Billsborough

Raining

Two galaxies drawn up
Two miles apart
Upon that final night
Await the obliterating dawn.

Two armies
The British and the French
Entrenched and crouched above
Their separated fires
Bowed by fear, the driving rain,
The downpour welcome
To the British high command,
But to the other brings despair.
Since their superior power
Of cannon fire will be absorbed
By the sodden ground
As they seek to pound
The British squares and enfilades
Into submission.

The vision of those dreadful missiles
Which use brave men as skittles
Will lose so much
Of their rearing, bouncing terror.

Now deep furrows shape
On Napoleon's brow
As he watches the rain again
From the flaps of his tent.
Should he now withdraw?
No, no, there is no time to spare.
His enemies gather from all quarters.
He must act now and
Deal with the Prussians later.
The rain may be a curtain
But he is certain
And has faith in his future.

Tom Billsborough

Reason

Let eyes and wings alight
Upon the anima of Reason.
Let our minds delight
In just conclusions
Based on evidential logic
And in the swallow's flight
And of the Painted Lady
And our own flights
In search of distant water.
Let us forgo the old lies
Based on guilt and fear
Which seek to pin the butterfly.
Forgo the dull charades
That stifle dreaming.

Tom Billsborough

Rebirth

Within our dark and secret sea
Soundlessly we grow
In our suspended state
With the sure flow
Of intravenous drip-feed
nutrients providing
All we need,
A world at peace,
The nirvana we were promised.
Imagine then our rage
When suddenly we are beached
To blinding light
Into a world
Of unintelligible noise
In a room where sudden jerky
Shadows loom,
Menacing and out of focus.
Not readily do we know
The reasons for our presence there,
Not then, and very rarely after.
And yet we grope for answers
To erroneous fate.
So now to seek
that blissful state again
We curl up in a ball
And entering the tide of reverie
We set sail to meditate and find
The still calm within our beings
The truth of origins.
We may yet fail,
But if the heart sings well,
Some notes may form a pure tune
To bring us back to peace and harmony.

Tom Billsborough

Rebirth?

The Skull may laugh
But cannot cloud the mirror
With that all-consuming answer.
What did he know at the point of death?
That all was but delusion?
Or was his cry delayed
Until the sudden shock of his rebirth
And a new era for his penitent religion.

Tom Billsborough

Recall Of Memories

As stars fade and as seas recede
Memories, our syllables of being,
Sink down into the depths of time.
Some may return but surely are transformed
By Time's lapse and our newer minds,
Practising to edit history.
And is our language even quite the same?
A memory is not itself experience
Unless a written record is engraved
Beyond the reach of modifying self.

Tom Billsborough

Red And Black

Red and black, Roulette.
Wheel spun to winter sunset,
Ruby ring encased in Jet.
Black holes spin.
Ignited Universe
And the onset on verse.
Red and black, Roulette.
Oh! Fate!
And my blood spins
Through dark chambers of my heart.
Let chance commence the dance
In spinning pirouettes.
Let colours coalesce as souls
Compose Love's Madrigals!
Red and black, Roulette.

Tom Billsborough

Reflect

When speaking to a prisoner do not offer resistance: enter
His cell, becoming a mirror.

Let him be seen in you, because he is never seen,
Refuge in yesterday, always eating the same piece of bread,
Drinking the same drink of water, mistaking scratches for caresses,
ruminating the pleasure of dissatisfaction.

Is he encased, disguised, having fled, hidden among the
Chairs? Does he insult, threaten and kick the air?

You have to be a reflection, an echo, a shadow, look for the loop, introduce
yourself like a thief.

Help him to see the walls that enclose him, invite him to
Demolish them, erase from his mind ingrained ideas, give him the desire to live
his own life and not the one imposed.

Tom Billsborough

Reflections

I gaze down spiral stairways,
Cerebral cortices of dreams
Seeking the true is
In the dark cellars of seems.
Is what I think I know
A temporary web
Of spiders stretched in corners
Of my mind and words
Mere flies buzzing
Before the entrapment
Of remote illusions.
I snatch at this and that
And draw conclusions
Mesmerized by a current hunger.
I am fed alone on what
My senses may impart,
Impartial and selective art
Of touches, sounds
Of form and colour arranged
In instant kaleidoscopic jigsaws.
But never see the exact picture
Or choose my own perceptions.

Tom Billsborough

Reflections In A Mirror

Hardly one song survives my cold embrace.
I am my mirror which studies every flaw,
Each superfluous line, the ponderous flesh,
Needing to be excised.
As if my mirror opposite should wish to airbrush out
The smooth momentum from my music.
Oh, how I hate my Torquemada self
That tortures me as I compose my verse,
Reducing me to be a stuttering wreck,
And thus withhold the truth
Of what I feel and which my images express!

Tom Billsborough

Remembrance Day

Remembrance forms
In mouths of poppies
In Youth's dark blossoming wounds
In strobe light postures
Of the newly dead who fall
Defending dying cultures;
Or, wounded, fall and drown
In shell-holes' false shelters.
Whilst those who did survive
Must feel remorse for their survival.
The cycle must resume tomorrow
Disturb the earth and poppies grow
In Flanders' fields of sorrow.
This we must remember.

Tom Billsborough

Reptilian Romance (Part One)

So Sami sat upon her stone,
Completely naked, all alone.
Sad because it was no joke
Cos no-one else could talk
Or listen to her latest moan.

Tom Billsborough

Reptilian Romance (Part Three)

Their ears have gone. They've lost their speech.
Communication's out of reach,
So baby snakes will never know
Snaky Sagas from Long ago.
Say Ah! Their parents cannot teach!

And all because of Sami's blunder
Reptilian culture's blown asunder
The sadness of this tale
Will make you want wail
I hope it makes you wonder!

So off we go along on Sami's trail
As she hops along quite smartly on her tail
With many a little bound
Soon Eden Park is found
She makes towards her favoured Ice Cream stall.

But tragedy awaits. The gates are closed
A brief new notice there imposed
'Sundays are for prayer'
Sami cries..Oh, S'not fair!
As all her dreams of play dissolved.

Tom Billsborough

Reptilian Romance (Part Two)

Her mates were learning how to crawl.
It really sent them up the wall,
Sad Anaconda wails
For rearing once upon their tails
They reached the tops of trees so tall...

It pricked her conscience to the quick,
For just before her dirty trick
On Eve had led to this.
No wonder snakes go 'hiss'
At passing legs that march so slick!

But God had ruled in his still small voice
But rather louder, tinged with malice,
That snakes must slide on ribs
While making for their local pubs.
No fault of theirs but they had no choice.

For human kind it's not so bad..
Crawling back they're awful glad
To reach their home at all
Or at a lamp-post stall,
Their random songs both bright or sad.

Tom Billsborough

Requiem

Sculpture should be set
In stone, not flesh
Smoothed out unnaturally
And cold as marble to the touch,
So truly out of reach
In this small room's
Relentless silence..
Your mouth agape registering
The moment of your death
When the bubbly fountain
Of your voice ceased suddenly
And your sweet breath forever stilled.
This is but a shadow
Which must fade and which
I am compelled to leave for burial.
Not you, my love, no, never.
I shall not fail, as Orpheus did,
To claim you back from death
With songs and gentle memories.
We shall prevail, we shall prevail.

Tom Billsborough

Requiem To Rebirth

White temple tall I stand.
As lips apart, the doors are open
To all Faiths. The organ swells
The pipes both red and blue
With melancholy music.
The choir breathes out
The nave breathes in the oxygen of song
And from the lectern
Rings the final eulogy.
And yet the catafalque is bare
Since she has flown, inhabits every pore,
And fills my halls with glorious memory.
I am an empty building, void in silence
Unless I drink you in, my love,
O my superior essence.

Tom Billsborough

Response To Challenge -Kelly

Now donning our tartans and woad
We'll sweep down the Border's long road
With no claymores but pens
We'll seek out your dens
You lads from those countries abroad.

Tom Billsborough

Restless Soul

Be calm, my soul,
You are here to stay.
You were absent.
That was yesterday
In my earlier being.
Think not about tomorrow.
It only brings you sorrow
When what you think you are
Is not what you will be.
Soon, I'm told, you will be free
To face eternity alone
Without my constant being.

Tom Billsborough

Rhyme

I'm not averse to verse
Bud some rhyme
All the time
And that can be a curse.

Tom Billsborough

Ricky The Third Goes Camping

Now is the Summer and I was in my tent
Made weary winter by this constant rain.
The clouds had burst and what was worse
My tent was pitched below a drain.
The rain in rivulets did course
Right through the tent and set afloat
Myself and air-bed like a boat
And swept me into yonder brook.
Oh, dearie me! Oh chuck, chuck, chuck!
Oh, rescue me, my knight so bold
Oh, save me from this water course.
I'm sopping wet and ff..ff.. flipping cold
My kingdom for a horse!

Tom Billsborough

Rondeau Of The Sea

Let a Rondeau be the Sea's Ode,
Always returning to the same shore,
Where waves clap hands in self-approval
It is their curtain call, no more
After a long stroll across the stage
With the rise and fall of fame
Briefly washing the sand's page
And sliding back to absence.
Let the rondeau be the Sea's Ode,
And ours too, relapsing into silence,
And the flat calm of the all knowing.

Tom Billsborough

Rrecreation

I recreate your name, your image
From a thousand memories,
Scattered in our mutual destiny,
A living unity
Nameless and faceless
And yet the Spirit's heart,
The centre of the mirage
And the greatest love.

Tom Billsborough

Ruff! Ruff!

There was a grey Clerk
I guess I heard him go bark.
Lost dog in the dark.

Tom Billsborough

Sadly Updated Nursery Rhymes

Girls & Boys come out to play
But mostly stay at home
Transfixed by their laptops
And their mobile phone.

Georgie Porgie pudding and pie
Kissed the girls and made them cry.
And when they charged him with assault
Our Georgie cried: 'It's not my fault.'

Mary had a little lamb
She loved it oh so true
But mint sauce she loved better
So Lamb became lamb stew.

Tom Billsborough

Sailor Come Home

I heard a lyre a plucking
Upon a distant shore
A song was borne along the breeze
It lasted ever more.
It was a song of Sappho
To call her brother home,
Who was a merchant sailor
And was inclined to roam
To many a distant shore.

Tom Billsborough

Salmon Leap

Perpetual waterfall,
A green pool,
Where willows bow their shadows.
Its solace I swallow
And allow it to patrol
The tenuous suburbs of my soul.
Not long before the reckless salmon
Leap and fall, leap and fall.
Until they reach the higher level,
Nearer to the spawning grounds.
I think myself so small composing sounds,
As witness by comparison,
With only brief orisons
To their real endeavour.

Tom Billsborough

Samhain

Now is the evening of Samhain,
The last one of the dying fall,
When the flushed woodlands
Echo the setting sun and the red fires
Which glow in homage to the dead.
Samhain! Samhain! This time
Recalls all who have gone before.
The time when membranes
Of our souls stretch out
As thinly as the sea's skin,
And osmosis of the spirit
Lets us plunge below
Into this other space
Where space is meaningless
To greet lost friends and ancestors.
It may well be that,
In our heightened states,
The whispers that we hear,
Are nothing but the souging of the wind
Sucking from the trees each falling leaf.
But our belief, indeed our faith, remains
That we shall meet the dead again.
And for this reason now,
We light the candles for the ritual.
The first is red to represent the season,
The next three candles, grouped together,
Red and black and white in colour
Recall all aspects of our Goddess Queen.
The last one white to symbolise the hearth.
And now the Mother, robed in red,
Takes the bread and offers some to each
Who form the circle, kneeling down before
The inner circle and the altar.
Says she: "Take this and have sufficiency
In the coming Winter's days."
And then the Maid, robed all on white,
Will offer purifying salt
To guard their victuals and their health.
And then the Crone, robed all in black,

Will offer wine to make their spirits strong,
Through the long tracks of winter nights.
Now everyone will rise and feast
On roasted pork with apple sauce,
And herbs and other food
And raise a cup of wine to toast
The spirits which surround them in the wood.
Let all rejoice and blessed be.

Tom Billsborough

Sand Dunes

Couch-grass the idea
The magnet to entrance
Dry sand its substance
A white shroud
Whipped by the wind
Many a cloud
It gathers in its waxy arms.
Later on
The long-legged marram
Imposes stability and rhythm.
Creative poem. Sand dune!

Tom Billsborough

School Dinners

What is this concoction?
They're taking the mick.
The acne of perfection
It's called Spotted Dick!

They say that a Hot Pot
Will do you much good.
But when I look down
It looks vaguely like mud.

Boiled beef and carrots
Are easy to chew
If you happen to be
A big cat at the Zoo.

Tom Billsborough

Scottish Motto

Touch not ye a gloveless cat
Nor grab by its tail a rat
The warning is there
So let them beware
Our motto is lurking in that.

Tom Billsborough

Sea Nymph

I often imagine her thoughts
Returning to that shore
Where once she sang
With such grace and fervour
That even the waves seemed
Stilled in their flight
And ceased their incessant moans,
Like an audience enraptured
Briefly they paused
Absorbing the beauty
Of her magical tones.

Tom Billsborough

Sea Pollution

Our bloodstream is the Ocean
Pulsating pole to pole,
From east to west it rises
And it falls
At the Moon's bequest,
It's living soul.
From rain to stream to Ocean
Continuously in motion
The very essence
Of our planet's health.
So why condemn it
To a micro-plastic death?
Furring its arteries
With used cosmetics,
And other non-essential products,
Poisoning the bloodstream
And potentially our brains?
We must regain our sanity
Before it is too late
And stop all these pollutants
Which vandalise our Fate.

Tom Billsborough

Seascape

My spirit self wakes to the sound of the sea
As each wave breaks out from its long sleep
In cathartic music.
Drum beats echo my embryonic state and the foam scatters
Like disconnected thoughts.
Rocks crouch like satyrs in dark corners,
Issuing collusive whispers.
Persistent Vespers on the rolling tide.
I hear you now, creator of all things, the one true God,
Calling me from your vast womb,
To sing my anthems to your female glory
Within this cathedral of true shape
Fitting as the crab's carapace.

Tom Billsborough

Second Elegy

Which serf does not desire his liberty
Or boat its home-port's sanctuary?
As I await, alas, both day and night,
From you, my love, your gracious sight.
My sadness would be ended with a glance,
My sadness end if I should have the chance
To see you yet again. From this long wait,
Alas, In vain I lament my fate.
Cruel, so cruel, that you should swear
To come back soon after your first letter.
Have you such small remembrance of my breath?
What's wrong with me that you should break your faith?

Tom Billsborough

Self Discovery

Flat on her stomach,
All her limbs aching,
Inch by inch forward she squeezed
Through the long crawl,
That tight wet tunnel,
Not knowing whether,
If she got stuck,
She could ever return
To her home.
Brave girl! Eileen!
Yet the breeze in her face
Told the tale of a cavern beyond,
And spurred her on
Through that limestone worm-hole.
When she broke through
She became the first to witness
The natural wonder of the cloud chamber.
What ecstasy of heaven
Enwrapped her tired frame
And lifted up her eyes
Towards a cloud of stalactites
Formed of a thousand narrow needles
Through many calcifying
Centuries of time.
And she the very first
To enter that uplifting chamber.
Perhaps she thought how deeply
We must burrow to witness
And expose great beauty.

Tom Billsborough

Senryu Series Just One More 6 (Gleanings From The Cutting Room Floor)

Addendum to Duos (Senryu Series) Kelly Kurt

Adam and Eve kelly

Fictional sinners
Mesopotamian pair
She took his ribbing

Adam and Eve wes

Mister West at dark
All jokes are original
Parents of killer

Adam and Eve tom
Where Did we go wrong?
Your fig leaf's slipped again, dear
So are the Sins, Wes!

Arm and a Leg kelly

Exorbitant price
Hokey Pokey essentials
Main appendages

Arm and a leg wes

Give gun and help walk
Look better on a woman
Two are on each side

Arm and a Leg tom
My legs wouldn't, Wes!
One of each, saves on socks, gloves.
Both for Octopus

Bacon and Eggs kelly

Breakfast paradigm
European forage plant
Shopping list staples

Bacon and eggs wes

Sizzling and salty
Same as we had yesterday
Man who is steady

Bacon and Eggs tom
Why "English"; breakfast?
Can't beat `em, so just fry `em
Top start for the day.

Salt and Pepper kelly

Foremost in spice rack
Distinguished gentleman's hair
Female hip hop group

Salt and pepper wes

Slap and shoot a lot
They should be used sparingly
Best not with ice cream

Salt and Pepper tom
No spice in hair now
Try pepperoni Ice, Wes!
Back to dizzy blond!

Batman and Robin kelly

Dynamic duo
DC Comics' crime fighters
Dubious union

Batman and Robin wes

I was there at start
Probably eat most insects
Gotham City guys

Batman and Robin tom

The Caped crusaders
Adam West the Camp Comic
Two flighty creatures

Death and Taxes kelly

Only things certain
One's better than the other
But only slightly

Death and Taxes wes

Of no interest
Due date of latter certain
Notices posted

Death and Taxes tom

Always come on Time
Unlike that sound-a-like car
Immortal. Don't pay!

Jekyll and Hyde kelly

Stevenson novel
Freudian duality
Many an ex-wife

Jekyll and Hyde wes

Nice guy and bad guy
I don't know how to Jekyll
Manic depressive

Jekyll and Hyde tom
Evil creeping out
Drank ultimate Micky Finn
One wife quite enough!

Rock and a Hard Place kelly

Metaphorical
Impossible dilemma
Where a Hyrax lives

Rock and a Hard place wes

Somewhat similar
Those would not be my choices
Dismal selection

Rock and a Hard Place tom
Which one is softer?
A quick way down for climbers
Heavy Metal Club.

War and Peace kelly

Tolstoy's epic book
The latter rarely breaks out
Straightforward option

War and Peace wes

There is a diff'rence
Not left up to you and me
Hawk and Dove symbols

War and Peace tom
Phwoor and piece on our T.V.
Er, Ruskie's have vanished, Nap.
Odd trip to Moscow

Tom Billsborough

Sex-Change

From puberty in torture and despair
He fought to change his given gender.
Through psychiatric tests, the long delays,
The interviews, the plain refusals,
His female mind so desperate
To find a female body.
His wife's deserted him for someone else
Whose wife became his greatest friend,
She was to us Miss Anne, or just plain Annie,
A gentle soul but honest in appraisal.
He worked so hard to raise the cost
Of operations that he faced
And meet the harsh conditions.
He had to live two years as a woman
Before they'd offer him the final op.
Success! The kindest cut of all
Upon the operating table!
Our Jim endured a sex change
Into something rich and strange,
And became Jeannette!
No drama like the 'Tempest'. In fact
After the final act her friend,
Our mistress Annie did conduct
A close inspection of the final product.
And sadly she declared:
'That's not a proper Fanny! '
Oh dear! But after all her toils
This was a minor upset
A little crack in her self-esteem
And best forgot.
I never saw it so I cannot
Comment on the pure aesthetics
Nor indeed the question of genetics
Implicit in my story.

Tom Billsborough

She Lives On

My Olympic flame
Nothing blows the candle out
Till we meet again.

Tom Billsborough

Shock Waves

Shock waves, and the tsunami of terror,
Without warning, indiscriminately kills
and fills the plaza
With the silent dead and moans of the dying.
For the sake of belief in a falsified dogma
He suddenly fashions an earthquake of horror,
From the torn shards of his sensate being.
Who proposed this terrible drama?
Who are the people who induce young men
To seek glory hereafter
In the name of an honored religion,
To bring blame where none is due?

Tom Billsborough

Siena Mi Fe

In Siena I was born
The Maremma undid me
So Francesca swirled away
Borne by incessant winds,
Betrayal's destiny.

Tom Billsborough

Silence

Silence is golden
Or perhaps a truth unheard...
The cry of a slave.

Tom Billsborough

Silent Pact

Nothing sings like touch.
No word has resonance like this,
A gentle kiss, the hand upon a hand
Is worth a sonnet of impassioned speech.
We reach and switch on instant pleasure.
Your soft flesh so electric
Illuminates your eyes with magic.
Though we are mute
We understand our fate to be conjoined.
If words were needed, three would be enough
To seal the faith which now we
Undertake together and which through love
Will surely last forever.

Tom Billsborough

Sing

Sing me Sappho's prosody, trochaic water,
Well of my soul, as sorrowing Demeter,
Stirred by Baubo's wild shape and bawdy laughter,
Came back to being.

Tom Billsborough

Singing In Unison

Breton, Welsh, Cornish.
One Anthem of great beauty.
Let's sing together.

Tom Billsborough

Slate Quarry

The light descends
Nearly supplanting
The sculpting shadows.
The Clouds have donned
Their surplices!
Choir!
Suddenly today
The ghosts of yesterday
Hover over the incipient
Ruins by the abandoned quarry,
Big-bellied, carrying
The weighty volumes of memory.
And the blue-grey slates,
Small stacks, discarded volumes
Of a disused library,
Of a redundant, now silent history.
The light descends
And only the white clouds witness.

Tom Billsborough

Snag A Ram

IF I NOT ON CAT I..

will complain

Tom Billsborough

Snake

Hardly a sound in your world,
Only the repetitious "S";
In your coiled strength,
Your sliding motion and your suddenness,
The pure silk of your pink mouth,
The sloughing of a whole skin,
And that sparkling newness
As you stretch, easy in your new length,
Cool and supple as a stream's dance.
I hear no hiss as your tongue's black tips
Like a shivering nerve detect that strange warmth,
Nor hiss of triumph as you swallow whole your prey.
Hardly a sound in your world,
Only the echoing "S";
In your bold stare belying
The true shyness of a snake
As you watch me from a safe distance.
The "S" contains your whole being
Which makes you more complete than me,
As I have no sound's shape.

Tom Billsborough

Snow Melts

Snow melts and waves disperse.
Dreams merge with the Universe.
Only Love remains.

Tom Billsborough

Snowflake

Lightly as a snowflake
I fall into a trance
The microscope reveals
A magic world of chance.
Asymmetry prevails
Beyond a flowery core.
From silver stems, leaves
May flatten, dip or soar.
Structures in disorder
By randomness inspired
Like particles and waves.
Lightly as a snowflake,
A random dream creates
An image or a phrase
That in the morrow fades
And then beyond recall.
And so my snowflake melts
Its unique image lost
Or frozen like an ancestor
In a fading photograph.

Tom Billsborough

Some Sort Of Epitaph

Close my eyes but do not sing in sorrow.
Let grief not linger on just like a shadow.
You taught me how to smile with gentle song
Which have enriched my soul and made it strong
To face the unknown vistas of tomorrow.

Close my eyes and with the briefest gesture
Say farewell but look towards your future.
You have much to tell in verse and rhyming
Think deeply of the truth in your contriving
Think of the glories that exist in Nature.

Close my eyes and if you can remember
A poem forms in sadness and in laughter.
So many times I've read and still recall
The magic uplifts and the dying fall
Of cadences of which you were creator.

So close my eyes and think upon your way
He's just upon an extended holiday!

Tom Billsborough

Something Arising

Still I rise like a Yorkshire Pud.
And it feels good, real good.
My verse it may be worse than swill
But I rise still.

Tom Billsborough

Song Bird

In the beginning, nothing
But my breath which briefly
Clothes the dark surrounding trees.
A transient ghost, as I like Calliope□
Of the shadows await my Orpheus
And his lyre to summon up
His pale Eurydice, unseen.
At last a single note to punctuate the night,
And then the stanzas start,
Each phrase a snowflake with its six sharp points
In perfect pitch, and like the snowflake
Patterns subtly changing, phrase by phrase.
I gaze above but cannot see the source
Of this melodious wooing,
But trust Eurydice will wake
To hear love calling
Or is my nightingale rehearsing
For a time more opportune for courting?
Nothing stirs as if the very wood is listening!

Tom Billsborough

Song Of A Faun

Sapphire eyes,
Seductive smile,
Who were you?
Audacious girl.
Standing proud
Upon the shore
Singing loud
Your plaintive song
Above the raucous waves.
Were you human
Singing home
A mariner's safe return.
Or were you that immortal faun
Who wished to have
A normal life
Instead of your celebrity.
Sapphire eyes,
Seductive smile,
Who were you,
Audacious girl,
Who once so briefly
Was my dream?

Tom Billsborough

Song Of The Naiad

Cool pool under the tall waterfall.
Seen through the sheer lattice
Of resounding water.
Which I part to suffer the pleasure
Of its sudden sprays of icy fire.
Look upwards but abandon the sun's rays
As I swoop below into this font of paradise,
Of my renewal,
Absorbing now my natural apparel.
As I swirl and roll within the water's endless dance.
I need no name for this new baptism.
It suffices to be alone and calm
My spirit free of all external dalliance
Anonymous, transformed
Into a water nymph,
Tactile as the breath of silence.

Tom Billsborough

Song Of The Rider

Cordoba... so far away...alone.
My pony black.. full moon
And olives in my saddle-bag..
And, though I know the roads,
I'll never reach my Cordoba..

Along the plain.. the wind..
My pony black.. red moon
Yet death is watching me
From distant towers of Cordoba.

How long, how long the road,
How brave my pony is
How patiently Death waits
Before I come to ba..
so far away... alone.

Tom Billsborough

Song Of The Transvestite

Satin gown with silver lights,
Ruby knickers, pearly tights,
Golden bangles, golden hair,
Bedecked, bejewelled now I share
My inner secrets with the mirror.
(Malicious glint from open razor)
And saucily adjust
The saggy outline of my bust.

At last, full length before the glass
I thoroughly inspect myself... I pass.
And, leading off with padded bra,
I waddle out towards the car.

I drive along, irresolute,
Towards the Women's Institute
And there between the cups of tea
We talk of sex equality..
And how the latest clothes express
A girl's desire for unisex.

I think my smile of irony.
Should symbolize our unity.

Tom Billsborough

Song Of The Withered Orange- Tree

Woodman. Cut my shadow.
Release me
From this torment
Of seeing myself barren.

Why was I born among mirrors?
The day revolves around me
And the night copies me
In each of her stars.

I wish to live, not seeing myself,
And I shall dream
That the ants and the hawks
Are my leaves and my birds.

Woodcutter. Cut my shadow.
Release me
From this torment
Of seeing myself barren.

Tom Billsborough

Sonnet No, Ten Louise Labe

When I should view your fair head justly crowned
With laurel leaves, please make your lute so plaintively
Resound that it compels each rock, each tree
To follow you. Oh, when I see you so bedecked

And surrounded by ten thousand marks of virtue
Of such renown that no one else achieves
And all the highest praises that we weave
Now tell my heart so passionate for you.

So many virtues that make you so well loved
By which we all make you so highly valued
Will you not also give your love to me?

And add to your virtuous fame
By remembering my pitiful name
That my love may enflame you gently.

Tom Billsborough

Sonnet No. Eighteen Louise Labe

Kiss me again, re-kiss me for afters
Give me one of your most delicious raptures
Give me one of your most amorous captures
I shall return you four hotter than cinders.

So you are in pain. Let me soothe you please
By giving you ten more soft caresses.
And, mixing the touches of our happy kisses
Let us ravish each other at ease.

Then a double life to each will appear
Each lives in the self and the beloved other.
Allow me, my love, to dream up such folly.

I am always unhappy, in these discrete ways,
And I can only live content on those days
When I spring out of myself completely.

Tom Billsborough

Sonnet No. Eleven Louise Labe

Oh, the soft glances, O eyes full of grace,
Little gardens, full of loving flowers
Where Love's sharp arrows come in showers
Arresting my eye when I see your face.

Oh, criminal heart, O cruel, unrelenting
How much you hold me in your harshest fashion
How much have I shed these tears with passion
Feeling the ardour which my heart is tormenting.

And yet my eyes with an abundance of pleasures
Receives such joy from your eyes and gestures
But you, my heart, the more your joy is alert,

The more you languish, the more you worry
Or guess that even if I too am happy
You feel the conflict of my eye and heart.

Tom Billsborough

Sonnet No. Fifteen Louise Labe

Let us honour the returning Sun's Splendour
The Zephyr, the serene air, its dressing,
Water and earth from their sleeps awaking
And He looks after them with hardly a murmur.

Indulgent, sweet, the earth itself adorns
Us with so many flowers of incomparable colour.
The birds from trees create a marvellous choir.
And we who pass along are eased of our concerns.

The nymphs enjoy a thousand games they're playing
By moonlight they trample the grass with dancing.
Do you, sweet Zephyr, come forth upon this hour,

You who renew the whole deep essence of me
Let the Sun flood my being with its power.
You will see such great enhancement of my beauty.

Tom Billsborough

Sonnet No. Five Louise Labe

Clear Venus, who wanders through the skies
Listen to my voice which sings to you its tears
As long as your face from Heaven's height appears
Its long sad labours of deeply worrying sighs.

My eye shall focus better when I rise.
There's so much crying when you see here
Better that my soft bed would be awash with tears
From these troubles you witness with your eyes.

So humans rest their weary souls in deep
And soft repose and gentle loving sleep
I suffer badly in Sun's exposing light

And when I am so close to being shattered
And when I go to bed completely tired
This crying makes me ill throughout the night.

Tom Billsborough

Sonnet No. Fourteen Louise Labe

As long as my eyes can shed their tears
Each passing day I miss you and your eyes,
And my voice resisting my sobs and my sighs
A little I must try to control my fears:

As long as my hand can play on the strings
Of my cute little lute, to sing of your charms
As long as my soul is content and it warms
To the fact that you know how strongly it sings.

Again I am wishing that I should not die
But when I feel that my eyes run dry,
My small voice broken, and my hand without power,

And my spirit in this, my mortal stay
Can no longer show such signs of love,
I pray that death darken my clearest day.

Tom Billsborough

Sonnet No. Nine Louise Labe

It is quite early when I am ready to retire
To my soft bed for much desired sleep
And my sad spirit out of me may creep
Forthwith to you it goes in sweet surrender.

It is my view that in my tender breast
I feel so good, where I have breathed so well
Where now the pleasant dreams may swell,
Where once I was by many sobs undressed.

Oh, gentle sleep, Oh night, my happy part!
Pleasant rest, so full of tranquillity
May my dreams continue through all nights:

Tom Billsborough

Sonnet No. Nineteen Louise Labe

The huntress, Diana, in the depths of the wood,
After dealing out blows to many a beast,
Was taking a breather, with her crowned Nymphs at rest.
Where often I'd rested like a fairy to brood

Without thought, when I heard a voice as thin as a sliver
Ask me a question. It said: 'Oh Nymph in a dream,
Why have you not come back to Diana, your Queen? '
And seeing me there without a bow or a quiver

It added; 'Oh friend of mine, why are you found
With your bow and your arrows no longer around? '
I replied to this stranger in more anger than sorrows:

'I have searched in vain but can find no traces
Somebody took them, my bow and arrows
And shot them off in hundreds of places.

Tom Billsborough

Sonnet No. Seven Louise Labe

As long as my eyes can shed their tears
Each passing hour I miss you and your eyes,
And my voice resisting my sobs and my sighs
A little I must try to control my fears:

One sees all creatures that to death must fall
When from the body the Subtle Soul departs.
I am that body, you the better part.
Where are you now, my most beloved Soul?

Oh, do not leave me swooning for so long.
Or saving me by being far too late.
Oh, do not put your body to that fate.
Bring back to me that half so loved and strong.

But, Love, be certain it's not so dangerous
That meeting of desire, so amorous
Let there be no accompanying strictures.

Nothing rigorous again but of a gentle grace
Which softly gives to me your lovely features,
Formerly so cruel, but now a warm embrace.

Tom Billsborough

Sonnet No. Three Louise Labe

Oh, deep desires, O hopes I hold in vain
Such wishes and such customary tears
Bring forth from me so many flowing rivers
Of which my eyes are sources and the fountain.

Oh cruelty, Oh unrelenting harshness
With pitying looks from those celestial spheres
To the chilled heart when passion reappears.
Do you think to grow my painfulness?

For yet again will Love draw out his bow
And loose upon me renewing fiery darts
That anger makes him do the worst of things.

For I am so distressed in all my parts
That one more wound would not increase my sorrow
No other place in me is there for further stings.

Tom Billsborough

Sonnet No. Twelve Louise Labe

My Lute, companion of my calamity,
Witness to my irreproachable sighs,
True controller and to my worries wise,
You have lamented often close by me.

How often have my cries afflicted thee
That, starting up upon some happy round,
You have struck up a deep lamenting sound,
Adapting your tone to suit a lower key.

And when you wish to change to major key
Intending thus to force a change in me,
You see again how tenderly I'm sighing

Accede at once to my dolorous complaint
To ease my worries with your soft restraint
And these sweet pains to sweeter ends releasing.

Tom Billsborough

Sonnet No. Two Louise Labe

O, those lovely brown eyes, O glances diverting
O, hot wishes, o tears expended
O, the long dark nights vainly endured
O, sparkling days, vainly returning.

O, deep sadness, o desires so obstinate
O, the time wasted, Oh lingering sorrows
O, a thousand deaths on a thousand tomorrows
O, the vile sins to count against my fate.

O, smile, oh face, hair, arms, hands and fingers
O, plaintive lute, violin, bow, the voice of singers
So many torches to cause a woman's ardour.

From you comes sorrow, from many fires I smart
In so many places do you burn my heart
Just one spark from you will me devour.

Tom Billsborough

Sonnet Xxv Louise Labe

Do not reproach me, Ladies, if I've loved
If I have felt a thousand torches burning,
A thousand trials, a thousand sorrows biting,
If in my crying I have my time consumed.

Let not my name become the cause of censure
If I have failed, the scars are surely present
Don't sharpen up their points, so violent,
But consider this, that Love, without your ardour

For a Vulcan to excuse you,
Without the beauty of Adonis to accuse you
Would, if it wished, still trap you by its art.

In having less than me those chance occasions
And more of my strong estranging passions.
So guard yourselves against a saddened heart.

Tom Billsborough

Sowing Seeds

Never take a step without burying seed.
Each new second begins an eternity, each pace
Each pace precipitates an infinite staircase,
Each gesture the nucleus of a new cosmos.
If the wise sows not, he is but barren reason.
He who accumulates without giving, empties himself.
Before you smooth the way, sweep from it your petrified illusions.
In the marsh of suffering, plant a flash of joy,
nail it firmly in that which only imitates the eternal.
You can follow the opposite path: the river's current
does not reject but polishes and includes the rough stone
The pebble submitting itself to the eternal gives sense to it
A single seed justifies the whole earth's existence.

Tom Billsborough

Sparrows

My garden was our playground,
Mine and the cat's too.
Now the sparrows own it,
That noisy little crew!
They charge across the lawns
Like kids just out of school
They buzz around in gangs
As silly schoolboys do.
Suddenly a pile of seeds
One sparrow might espy
And suddenly his mates
Rush over full of joy
And an awful lot of squawking
Rends the ruddy air
As if a shiny toy
Had suddenly appeared.
Old Woodie is alerted
By all these fun and games
A very plump wood pidgeon
Who so sedately roams
With slow and ponderous steps
Between the milling crowds
As though he were their master
Benignly looking on.
His wings are folded back
As he stoops to pick up seeds.
The little sparrows know he's there
But pay him little heed
As there's nothing there to fear.
He's just old Woodie, Wood-pidgeon
Like a master you hold dear!

Tom Billsborough

Special Pleading

What's up, doc?
It's seven o'clock..
Tick, tick, tick,
Across the wide Atlantic.
But i haven't had a hit today..
Oh, fiddle de doo dah day.
this is odd, this is risible,
Have I become invisible?
Is there anybody out there?

Tom Billsborough

Speedy Gonzales

Kingfisher, blue, orange fire
Arrows to water..
How I wish you'd move slower!

Tom Billsborough

Spider Unseen

Sleep's adhesive web
Ensnares me. And slowly
I am folded in a silk cocoon.
A spider plucks continual
Tunes upon his lyre
Of countless tensile strings,
Imposing his control unseen.
Will fear or flight proceed?
A claustrophobic nightmare
Or flight towards exotic
Dreams? Brief butterflies.
I cannot choose but lie
Here in suspense and now
Another me is exercising choice. □
But is he real? And is he really me?
Or mere mirror which holds
My image before I see myself?
Or the true conductor proposing
Fact on which I am compelled to act?

Tom Billsborough

Spring Flowers

Whilst gazing at these lovely flowers
Which Spring has touched with loving care
So each to make herself most fair
Now paints herself in splendid colours.

So fragrant are their subtle odours
Hearts renew the love they share
Whilst gazing at these lovely flowers.

The birds alight as supple dancers
On many branches flowering there
With songs of joy they fill the air

Altos, descants and the tenors.
Whilst gazing at these lovely flowers.

Tom Billsborough

Spring Night

The welcome rain returns
As one expects in Spring.
And borne upon the wind
It fills the whole night long,
Soaking the land with delight.
Clouds loom over country ways,
A lone light shines
From a boat that's passing by.
And in the morning, bowers
Damply shine laden
With an abundance of flowers.

Tom Billsborough

Squirrels

Auburns, peach, pale ambers and pale greens transfer
From earth to sky, suffusing it with complementary layers.
Shadow-tail, scurry back to the anthems of copper,
Garner life from sweet staves.

Tom Billsborough

St Michaels On Wyre

Itself a river, the Anaconda coils, uncoils
In swamps beside calm reaches of the Orinoco,
A foot in girth and thirty feet in length, it rises
Slowly seeking out its prey, wild pig or deer,
Exerts its muscles of enormous strength to squeeze
Its victim's breath away, and dislocates its jaws to swallow Whole its monthly
ration before a long and sated rest.

The Wyre itself conforms to no such boundaries of flesh,
Coils, uncoils its course from Bowland's Pennine source
Towards the Irish Sea it meanders with deceptive calm.
But when in spate, it writhes beyond its natural bounds,
To rupture banks and drown the dreams and uninsure
The future lives of those whose houses that it swamps.
It swallows whole communities with its ferocious floods.

Tom Billsborough

St Patrick's Day

Ireland, Ireland,
Together standing tall
Shoulder to Shoulder
We'll answer Ireland's call.

Ireland, Ireland,
Enjoy this special day,
With peace, and harmony and trust.
It was St. Patrick's way.

Ireland, Ireland,
There is a chapel dear to me
Upon our rocky shore
It watches o'er the Irish Sea
And shall for ever more.

Tom Billsborough

Stanza 2

We, with one accord,
Must feel the Moon's embrace,
The tactile world, the mobile
Sea in which we bathe
Our conscious dreams
Our deep desire to learn.
So let redundant Spirits
Dwell alone in dungeons
Or lie forgotten in still
Graves, their headstones
Faded by corrosive Time.
What need have we for Gods
And the impotence of prayer?
Let Reason fuel our future.

Tom Billsborough

Stanza 4

And the fugue of Time installs
Its interlocking melodies.
Beyond belief, the true creation.
Nebulae blossom and stars
Scatter like leaves blown
Before the wind yet seek
No general purpose for their being.
So why should we whose senses
Flourish in the actual believe
In some eternal soul?
The swallow swims through air
Its clock and compass set
With immaculate precision
Alighting on its summer station.

Tom Billsborough

Stanza 5

Tides turn. Tick-tock
The metronome of waves,
So many waves of Time's
Creation, particles and waves
A time for indecision!
A challenge for our reason
Flowers open slowly
In their time-lapsed splendour,
The poem forms within
My brow and Words appear
Like clockwork strangers
Tick tock tick tock tick tock
Clicking heels on pavements.
Life's perpetual motion,

Tom Billsborough

Stanza 7

Our eyes wing back
Our ears wing back
Towards the yesterday
And Time's tomorrows
Unerring and enduring
As the flight of swallows
Seeking the source of destiny
Beyond the distant stars.
To feel discovery's beauty
To reach beyond the known.
To learn to question all.
This more certain than a prayer
Which rings forever
To unanswered phones.

Tom Billsborough

Stanza 9

I have no faith in Faith
Tides turn to Reason
Articulate waves drown
Out its sandy castles.
Rosetta's now our swallow
Sweeping through the fallow fields
Of space and singing out
Like glorious sunlit summers.
And Painted Lady too
As now she flutters down
To settle on her comet.
What need have we for Gods,
The impotence of prayer?
Let Reason fuel our future.

Tom Billsborough

Statistics

One day, two types came to my door.
Explained that, unlike in days of yore,
Crime was rife and it was getting worse.
Hang on a mo. I replied in verse,
Thinking of Genesis (leaving Incest aside
Guess they'd no choice or the race would have died.)
I counted them out (like Noah) in pairs,
Adam and Eve were there
And their sons, Cain and Abel.
Yes, four of those guys in the fable.
Of which one was a murderer,
I make that one in four.
Holy Cow!
You say it's worse than that right now!
It's time I disappeared.
They too and they never reappeared.

Tom Billsborough

Steering

Boats are caught abeam
And flood with salty water
If we fail to steer.

Tom Billsborough

Stereotypes

Do not underestimate the stereotype.
Maybe you are thinking of a garden gnome
Wielding an ineffective hosepipe
Or white-hooded rednecks with foam
Issuing from their loud mouths
With words of vicious intent.
One stereotype was elected President.
Let us pray he becomes that garden gnome
Set upon the White House lawn
By the elders of the Grand Old Party!
And not the Klan's dark emissary.

Tom Billsborough

Still Life

Journeys begin by unravelling waters,
By this jade pool where constant eddies sculpture
Crowns of white pearl, sparkling tiaras..
Absence in true form.

Tom Billsborough

Stillness

Each song the stillness of love
Each star the stillness
And the knot of time
Each sigh the stillness of a cry.

Tom Billsborough

Strange Contrast

Some thirty years have passed
Since I last went to Koblenz
And leaned out from the battlements
Of the town's protective Fortress.
They call it Ehrenbreitstein
Which overlooks the confluence of the
Mosel and the Rhine..
The pale and pristine waters
Of the river down from Trier
Contrasted to dark, dank Rhine
With industrial waste to bear.
For many hundred yards the two streams
Side by side refused to join together,
It was a weird sight
The Mosel on the left bank
The Rhine upon the right.
The narrow stripe so pure
The wider one distressed
Until the mingling waters
Became a single mess.
Much has been achieved since then
In cleaning up the Rhine
But that amazing image
Remains forever in my mind.

Tom Billsborough

Stupid Cupid

Stupid Cupid

You've hit the wrong gal,

Yet again.

Get a new bow, old pal,

But I'm no paying.

Tom Billsborough

Sunset Seascape

Evening's spectrum. As the night impends
The high violets and blues compress
The lower layers of green and yellow
To narrow streaks above the final flourishes
Of orange and red still radiating from the white disc,
Halved by the sea's horizon.

A lone black yacht sails in the centre ground
Its elongated shadow echoing towards me
Mottling the waves as they approach.
The colours reverse in muted echoes
Of the falling sky.

Upon this shore, I sing a plaintive song,
As Fate now huddled in the drowning light.

Tom Billsborough

Surfboarding

With Titian's fine precision
She glides and cuts an arc upon
The brief blue canvas of a wave
On entering the whorls, that vast cave
Of water.
And she escapes with honour
Into her clarity of joy
As her quick signature
Rolls on into eternity,
Breaking into silence on the shore.
Her memory at least remains
The day she tamed the beast
Which threatened to engulf.
Her future.

Tom Billsborough

Surrender

To Love, surrender.
Share each sweet dream, each sorrow.
Link hands, tomorrow.

Tom Billsborough

Sweet Parting

Lucy now departs this life,
From a long dark tunnel into blinding light.
With trepidation but with faith and hope is borne aloft
To make her final journey in the waiting car.
Why did I linger on? Why wait? Why wait?
This is her guilt,
Not the fake marriage into which she was coerced.
But the betrayal of self for all those wasted years.
The door is open and Joanna
Waits to welcome her with smiles and tears
And Lucy yields at last to love,
At last obedient to her heart.

Tom Billsborough

Sweet Zephyrs

A soft breeze unfurls.
Her grass skirt silkily swirls
Orange blossom falls

Tom Billsborough

Ta'i Ta'i

I touch your velvet skin
Which lends bright colours to my being.
Whatever hue or colour you possess.
It does not matter.
One touch alone begins
An eloquence of feeling.
I clothe myself in the harem of your smiles
And eyes. Be they black or azure blue,
Or brown or green to amber, as they open wide
Echoing your gently parting lips.
My heart slips
Into oblivion
Sucking such nectar of illusion.
But if your eyes lacked warmth
I'd blame myself, my feeble compliment
Seeking such excess of reward.
The smile it is but lent
And does not set a precedent, or me afford
A further rash presumption.
You choose the gift, however meant.

Tom Billsborough

Taj Mahal

A prayer in pure white marble,
It raises up the soul
Through halls and minarets and domes
Towards a crescent moon
Aspiring to the stars,
Each glistening stone
A tear hewn out by grief
And the sure belief in Everlasting Love
Which one day they may share.
And in the pool's reflective mirror,
It kneels recumbent
In perpetual prayer.
In these white marble halls,
Oh Soul, you are at rest
Return to Him the Lord
At peace with Him
And He at peace with you...

Tom Billsborough

Take Your Time When Getting Up.

I rise just like a loaf of bread
Now proving in the warmth
I rise, my stomach says
cos I've been overfed.
I rise, my dear, and take your hand.
Your eyes are really stunning.
Come walk with me along this beach
Along the yellow strand.
I rise to watch the irises arising near my pond,
Like swords they stand erect before the wind.
I rise each morning from my sleep so deep
But in my dozy state I end up in a heap
As both my legs for a trouser leg compete.
I rise as Mr Purry now demands his grooming,
Though for my drug, my coffee I am gagging.
I don't know what today will be surprising.
Maybe if I keep on rising I'll do myself a mischief..
Like hit the ceiling... Oh what grief.
Perhaps I'll stay in bed and like my friend
Declare a Duvet day and so unbend
My limbs so weary from all this rising
And write a verse concerning flattening instead
As I stretch out upon my comfy bed.

Tom Billsborough

Talent Contest

He couldn't sing.
He couldn't mime,
Sitting in his Dalek Frame
Dressed like Davros from that show,
Doctor Who, I'd have you know!
Somehow he'd crept through all auditions,
Clearly helped by weird decisions.
In ten long years I've seen no worse
Except perhaps this `ere verse.
All the Judges buzzed him off.
The audience began to cough
As silence rent the Music Hall.
It was a moment to recall.
When voting viewers called the line
They firmly placed him ninth of nine!

Tom Billsborough

Tears Still Flow

Where stings the salt of tears?
I feel it here within my deepest soul.
I watched them fall
But could not stop the flow.
We both agreed it could not be
We could not break those other hearts
With our disloyalty.
And yet the stings remain.
I'll never be the same without your love.
Has it remained with you?
Or have you now moved on,
As some may glibly say.
But memory recalls our past despair.
The stinging salty tear.□

Tom Billsborough

Tenebrae

The Whole West becoming lemon-yellow..
And where the zenith bars, below the silent clouds,
In blackened flocks the melancholy birds
Continually streak the false sky with rain.

And in the garden sombre leaden haloes
Roses that are touched with violet wash,
And the vague dusk turning truth to lies
Inserts strange vapours damply where it brushes.

Livid, yellow-dazed and dulled by lead..
Within my ears a horse-fly hums a round
In monotone which seems to come from nowhere
That I know and leaving tears says: Never.. never.

Tom Billsborough

Texel Lighthouse

On high dunes, the lighthouse stands.
Scarlet stem, white collar,
Its transparent brain obeying automated commands.
It casts a pencil shadow out to sea,
Mirroring its beam.
Time's instrument too,
Sundial marking out the sands
Where tides sweep in obliterating Time.

Tom Billsborough

Thanking The Troll

It's clear you cannot read
you silly little weed.
Eighty points you've gifted me..
Carry on, thicko!
Tra la la.. Ta la lee...
My toatal's rising quicko!

Tom Billsborough

That Uncertain Smile

Her smile may be like fire.
But don't assume desire
Your feelings in a whirl
Dreaming of some future bliss
An all-consuming kiss.
She is your check-out girl
No more, no less
And you're her customer.
So please refrain
From bending on one knee
And issuing a quick proposal
To the embarrassment of all.
You may recall that bigamy
Is frowned on by the law,
Ending in a slow
Long queue waiting
For the porridge ladle.
If you are able
Think of it this way.
She is her own person
With her own reason
For awarding you that smile:
You called her by her name
Her shift is over in a while
You've put your card in upside-down
She may think you're a clown.
Oh God forbid, my friend!
But really in the end
A smile is just a smile.
So collect your bags and file
Off please. I'm waiting
To be served. It's me she fancies
Naturally.

Tom Billsborough

That Which Is

THAT WHICH IS

□

If you are water do not expect to resemble rocks.
If you are rock, do not attempt to flow.
The soft tongue does not imitate the teeth.
Hard teeth do not imitate the tongue.
Between tongue and teeth there is food.
Between night and day, the dawn.
Neither the past nor the future is the now.
Between the rational and intuitive, opens the miracle.
Matter is beauty, the immaterial is truth.
When Eternity gives birth to petals of light in clocks,
Tongues pierced by birds made of air,
Hands that pour honey and cloud-scented songs,
In the subsoil of the mind there shall appear a sink
Through which your thieving memory will drain itself.

Tom Billsborough

That's A Big, Fat Tree!

"Lack of exercise, "
I cried. The old oak barked back:
"How old are you, Jack? "

Tom Billsborough

The Anti-Rain Dance

Our ritual rain dance we rehearsed
Must now at once be quite reversed.
Since one I know has had a flood
Which, as you know, is not so good.
So if you choose your nearest tree
And form a circle orderly
Then dancing backwards with great care
Fully clothed (need not be bare)
Please chant this anti-rain refrain:
Dluoc uoy fi, niar, niar
Dum otni swodaem ruo nrut.
Lleps ruo yebo ot uoy egru ew
Llew ruo llif, stekcub ruo llif.

Tom Billsborough

The Coming Void

I am the vacuum.
I am the void you won't avoid.
I the seedless earth,
The yellow unforgiving sands,
Death Valley multiplied,
The shrinking glaciers,
The rising tide swallowing your lands.
I am your need,
Your tsunami of Greed.
So gather round, children,
Repeat after me..
Let us be free
To live for today
In our work and our play.
Banish your pain, banish your sorrow.
Banish tomorrow.
Leave that to me
For I am the vacuum,
I am the void you won't avoid.

Tom Billsborough

The Conscious Mind

You are the now, I your past event,
Disguised as consciousness,
The living model of your intent.
My senses swarm like bees,
Perpetually in motion,
Collecting nectar with mechanical ease,
Whilst you create the honey,
Which, as an afterthought,
I am allowed to see.

Tom Billsborough

The Corporate Hymn

Etched in our hearts, your proverbs and your laws,
We are the graduates of your seminars,
Ready at last for the transport of Your Word.
We came rough-cast, of no particular learning,
Called to your Mansions by desire alone,
The pure seeds ready to be sown.
We shall not weaken, though we may be cursed.
We shall not falter in our Corporate faith,
Courageously go forth to fill our quotas.
Nor shall we be silent in defense of you,
Nor of your products, but bear your badge
With honour lovingly and honour blind.

The Pantheon of all my salesmen echoing my anthem!
Glad, at last, to demonstrate their voice of unison..
Welcome! All of you are Welcome!
Take your seats and sit like ready hares
Attentive to my image on the screen.
I am the one who you aspire to be..
But being God I do not come in person.

Tom Billsborough

The Creator

Coaxed from nowhere
By insistent stares of screen or paper
Words emerge as notes on a score,
Each one both sound and symbol,
Binding together in unforeseen textures
To address and be possessed by the reader.
Were they ever mine?
Or am I just that tall piano
Standing in the corner,
Its white teeth gleaming with an insouciant smile,
Its black teeth dolorous
As the resigned gesture of an attendant butler?

Tom Billsborough

The Day They Went To Glasson

I saw a tall ship sailing
Up the Lancs Canal
Now wasn't that real funny,
Perhaps a touch banal.

The skipper's name was Davie,
A blue-eyed sailor boy.
He sailed the good ship "Goosie";
Shouting "Ship ahoy!"

Setting forth from Catforth
On a bright and sunny day,
The Capt'n and his comely crew
So bright and good and Gay.

Onwards sailed the frigate
Towards the river Brock..
The bo'sun wearing leather
The first mate in a frock.

The merry crew sailed onward,
The sun high in the sky,
Stopping off at Garstang
"Ahoy there, " was the cry.

Our Davie danced a hornpipe.
Gert said: "What a farce."
Tommy gave a baleful glare
And kicked him up the arse.

They sailed from Garstang City
Late in the afternoon.
So brash and bright and bonnie..
"Ahoy, lads. See you soon."

The anglers on the towpath
Gave the Victory sign.
The tug chugged ever onward
Through the foaming brine.

The frigate sailed past Cabus,
And on to Forton town.
The Skipper ripped his trousers.
Gertie tore his gown.

They sailed up north till by and by
Condon Green loomed large.
They tied the frigate Goosie up
She's just a frigging barge!

"We can't stop here. We must
Press on to Glasson Dock.
Just get your finger out, " quoth Dave.
"You there, in the frock! "

We've all the locks to struggle
Through so every man on deck,
And Gertie, take those high heels off..
Or you'll break your frigging neck! "

At last they moored at Glasson Dock.
The sky was bright with stars.
They went ashore and made their way
To one of the Jolly bars!

Tom Billsborough

The Dog Star

Sirius rising, seed of power..
Wind rode or tide rode
A reed boat sways the whole night,
Straining at anchor.

The papyrus dawn stretches.
The pale East trembles.
The priest too. Who knows.

Red sails tether
The dawn breeze.
The Nile renews her annual surrender.

Sirius rising, seed of power..
In this man's soul
What joy to compose its shell,
The hollow ritual!

Tom Billsborough

The Egyptian Woman

Where you sink, depth no longer is.
It is enough that I transport your breath
Within a single reed for a seed to burst
Beneath my heel upon these sands.

All came of a single blow of which nothing remains.
Nothing but the mark on my door
Of the embalmer's burned hands.

Tom Billsborough

The Flutter

Sometimes I feel the songs unfold
As restless movements of the unborn child
In the darkness of the womb.
Oh, solitude, you make sufficient room
To fashion from the embryo
The potent structures of our joy and sorrow.
Perhaps tomorrow
I shall feel the flutter of your music stirring,
My fingers moved to renovating.

Tom Billsborough

The Fountain

The fountain starts again.
Rippling its refrain
Above improbable shadows,
As goldfish fins flutter
To absorb the air-rich water.
Sharp as the verbs of movement
Is their darting dance.
Below the algae of our surfaces.
And if by chance I flit my grotto
Of inconsequence
Into translucent waters
May I also
Garner in the rich new flow.

Tom Billsborough

The Golden Touch

Hovering alchemists
With a feathery touch
By accident
Creating new life
In their constant search
For the elements to produce
Their pure liquid gold.
Ringing blue bells
On the bugloss spires
Consuming the silence
As are the faint rising
anthems of distant choirs
Which practise
Seeking the same powers
Of re-creation
In the tall cathedral
Across this field of meadow flowers.

Tom Billsborough

The Good Angel- Rafael Alberti

One year I was asleep, when an unexpected
Someone stopped by my window.
"Rise up! " he shouted.
And my eyes saw feathers and swords
And behind these.
Mountains and seas, clouds, peaks and wings,
The sunset and the dawn.

"See her there with her dream full of nothing."
"Oh, flood of desire, firm marble, firm light,
Firm, moving waters of my soul."
Some said: "Rise up! "
And I found myself in your warm place.

Tom Billsborough

The Graveyard By The Sea

This tranquil roof, where the doves parade,
Shimmers among the pines, among the tombs.
Midday, the Just, composes there from fires
The sea, the sea, always recommencing!
Oh, what recompense after deep thought
Is a long glance over the Gods' calm.

What pure effort of quick lightening
Devour many diamonds of invisible foam
And what peace seems to be conceived
When the sun rests above the abyss,
The pure creations of the Eternal Cause.
Time sparkles and the dream is knowledge!

Tom Billsborough

The Guitar

The Guitar's lament beginning.
The Dawn's cups are breaking.
The Guitar's lament beginning.
Useless it is to silence it.
Impossible to hush it,
Its weeping monotonous as water weeps,
As the wind weeps over the fall of snow
Impossible to hush it.
It weeps for things so far away.
Sand of Southern warmth,
Asking for white camellias.
It weeps... arrow without a target,
Evening without morning,
And the first dead bird upon the branch.
Oh, Guitar, heart so badly wounded
By its five swords.

Tom Billsborough

The Hippy Hippy Shakes

My cursor's unwell.
Developed St. Vitus dance.
If it's just mine. Hell!

Tom Billsborough

The Inner Being Speaks

Sing your mantras to the conditioned soul.
But not to me.
I am the chemistry which triggers all
And have no time to pause
In meditation.
I work in isolation
And constantly maintain my structure,
My ever changing sculpture,
Feeding in complexities and themes
eclectic dreams,
which he may turn to poems if I choose,
But only if I choose!

Tom Billsborough

The Intrusion Of Light

No-one holds the crystal dream,
Who breathes upon the sunlit film of water.
Since your stippled face dissolves
And ripple by each ripple, your sweet voice
now falters into silence,
Where once was eloquence.
A single touch will make you disappear.
As reticence colludes to douse my sight
And wakeful shadows now intrude
As if the copper circuit of the light
Had switched my consciousness
And you resume below the film
Your world of nothingness.
O, day's ironic curtain closing out the night!

Tom Billsborough

The Little Finger Speaks

Father

You have the right to a well deserved sleep,
Have beautiful dreams, my baby girl
And when it is dawn you will be happy
You will be well refreshed, my precious.

Daughter

I am sleepy and peaceful
But please sing me another cheerful song,
Daddy, please.
or tell me a fairy story.

Father

I have sung six already and my throat is parched,
And also four stories, and the rest.

Daughter

Oh, Daddy, I thought you loved me! '

And she began to cry.

Father

Ok Ok just one more cheerful song..

Daughter

And also a fairy story?

In a very pathetic voice, giving him an
angelic smile.

Father

Ok ok also a fairy story.
And when I have finished
You can count the sheep
And then you go to sleep. Yes?

Tom Billsborough

The Midas Touch

MIDAS... turned dust to gold.
I'M SAD.. as I turn gold to dust.
IS MAD? ...WELL, I am when I'm told
To sweep it up!

Tom Billsborough

The Music Of Love

I touch and you too
A slow silent melody
Instruments of love

Tom Billsborough

The New Olympics

I think of British talents.
There's plenty still about.
And one I find outstanding
Is the British Litter lout.

In the Mosel valley
And in the streets of Bonn
The rubbish has been swept away
In Britain that's not done.

And what about our Stag Nights
In Prague or Southern Spain
We really show our talents
At this exciting game.

Think of all those Bar fights
In all those Cowboy pics
With chairs and people flying
And fist fights in the mix.

We practise every Saturday
In the centre of our towns.
Ten pints fuel our training
For a chance of Olympic crowns.

So come on, all you sponsors
Back our earnest pleas
We need events that we can win.
And win them at our ease.

Tom Billsborough

The Oak Tree

Deciduous in the Fall,
Denuded of my cloth of gold,
I build a pyre of yellow flames
Whose gradual ashes at my feet
Renew the forest floor.
I plan my garden with meticulous care
As snowdrops and the aconite appear
And bluebells wash me with their waves of glory.
And raucous sparrows cram my boughs
To dive-bomb insects from the flowers below.
I meditate upon the nourishment I gave,
A wise investment of my sacrificed attire.

Tom Billsborough

The Older You Get

Am I old enough
To kick water in puddles.
Catapult strangers?

Tom Billsborough

The Passion

Virgin dressed in crinoline
Virgin of the Solitude
Opened as an immense tulip.
In your ship of lights
You sail through the city's high tide,
Among the singing of ballads
And the crystal stars.
Virgin dressed in crinoline,
You sweep through the street's river
And down to the sea!

Tom Billsborough

The Plane Tree

You lean, Great Plane tree, and offer yourself nude,
White as a Scythian youth
But your candour is caught, and your foot held fast
By the strength of the site.

Oh, echoing shadow where the same blue sky,
That carries you off is appeased.
And the dark mother compels the pure new foot
On which the mud weighs heavy.

The wind does not wish your voyaging brow,
And the dark tender earth,
O Plane tree, will not let your shadow
Marvel at its stride.

This brow may access alone the shining steps
Which the sap itself allows,
You may grow, O candour, but never burst
The knots of the eternal halt.

Tom Billsborough

The Portrait Of A Saint

My goodness! My cat!
He's always asleep,
Stretched out on the carpet
In front of the fire,
Passive as a monk in prayer.
Such a glorious past life
Has given him this honour.
I am witnessing
The rebirth of a Saint.
My goodness! My cat!
How well you demonstrate
The power of laziness
Without equal,
And the sanctity of sleep.

Tom Billsborough

The Power Of Song

Sappho's sweet song
And plaintive lyre pluck
The Cyprian from her myrtle sleep,
Calling her to reignite
By charismatic power,
The subject of her heart's desire.
Aphrodite comes unseen,
To re-anoint the chosen one
Who dances round the altar
In a circle with her friends, oblivious
To all feelings but the heat
And the welcome cooling of her feet
Which beat soft rhythms
On the dewy lawn and she,
As we ourselves, responds
To Sappho's subtle music,
And so her love returns to her.

Tom Billsborough

The Rites Of Spring

Old tree with shapes of breast and hips
And boughs outflung.
Ancient statue and the joy of new-born Spring.
My nakedness would flower your destiny
And folly.
But my love seeks the pure folly of the breeze
Its melody.

Tom Billsborough

The Rochester Recruiting Sergeant

Drum up support, my fine fellows,
The crowd is swelling.
The recruiting officer bellows
His generous offer of the King's shilling.
The press gang court shadows
Alert for the drunkard who staggers
And slips into seamanship,
Awakes to the nightmare
Of floggings and stale biscuit.
There's nothing more fun
Than fighting the French, we think,
Until, in the blink of an eye,
Cannon balls tear great holes
In our precise squares.
Who dares dies.
Smart young men in bright red gear,
Targets for ladies looking for heroes,
but now in the mesh
Targets for bullet and bayonet
Creating poppies in their disturbed flesh.

Tom Billsborough

The Sea Shanty

Tides turn. She turns in her immense bed.
Forever restless, conscious as our bodies
while we sleep and dreams form,
Plundering the waters of our experience.
I call her she for, though inanimate,
In one sense, she is wholly female,
For deep within her lies the uterus of life.
A long, slow process
As sensations formed and the fugue began
Its interlocking melodies.
Beyond belief, the true creation.
The nebulae blossom and stars scatter
Like leaves yet seek no general purpose
But the beauty of their being
So why should we whose senses
Flourish in the actual of true knowing.
Think we have a reason for being

Tom Billsborough

The Sea, The Sea

I am the sea,
Awash with flotsam of dreams,
The debris of jetsam,
Exhausted ideals,
Which waves recycle.
I am the sea,
A pumping ventricle,
Governed from beyond
My conscious being.
I am the sea,
My shoals of neurons
Dart incessantly,
Bounded but boundless
As that other me
Which I am not allowed to know.
No mermaids sing to me
From distant shores,
But from the depths
A song may bubble up
As Life created
From the geyser's mouth
And I am sated by my false belief.

Tom Billsborough

The Sea, The Sea.

Cyrus dead, and now bereft of purpose and reward,
The Grecian army faced their only choice, retreat,
Across the seedless deserts, the high and icy passes
Of Persia and of Armenia. Northwards they trudged
Through unforgiving clouds of biting sand
And blinding snow, Xenophon and the ten thousand,
A rudderless fleet, blindly swept about both here and there,
Attacked at all quarters by surrounding enemies,
Suffering the agonies of thirst and hunger
That death alone would salve. Yet in despair
They went forever northwards under that hostile sun,
The freezing air of evening as guards on vigil
Shivered with hypothermic fear, thinking of their homelands
And wondering why they'd come so far from home
To fight another's cause which now his death had cancelled.
At the break of day, a team of scouts were ordered out on survey.
Reluctantly they climbed a steady slope towards another ridge,
So many had they scaled the day before, each one a wave
Leading to another to mock their vain endeavours.
Not one of them dreamt that hope would come their way
As they took their final steps towards this ridge.
But then a moment later despair dissolved as they cried out
And clutching one another, shouted to their colleagues down below: Thalatta!
Thalatta! The sea! The sea! '
Which in deepest blue appeared not five miles distant
Washing the toes of Trebizond,
A port of safety they thought they'd never see!

Tom Billsborough

The Shepherd On The Rocks

When, from the highest fell
I look deep down into the dale
And sing.... and sing..

Far from the dale so dark and deep
Echoes rebound and upwards sweep,
Ringing from the chasm.

The further that my voice resounds
So much the brighter it rebounds
From down below, from down below.

My love, from me she dwells so far
How much I long to be with her
Down there, so far down there.

Yet soon the Spring will come
The Springtime and my Joy
So must I now make ready
To wander forth again.

Tom Billsborough

The Silent Majority

In busy streets is the greatest silence.
Each locked in his or her thoughts
And endeavours.
No time for the dalliance
Of speech except mumblings
About the weather.
Time dominates their pleasure
And propels their reticence.

Tom Billsborough

The Singing, Ringing Tree

From the singing, ringing tree
Tall winds reap plaintive melodies
On a wild moor,
High above the valley floor.
Aeolian music whispering
Sonic magic by fate alone
Ringing through the hollow steel tubes
Of varying lengths and disparate angles
That suggest the structure
Of a gale-tormented tree.
Echoes by its random, melancholy sounds
Cathy's ghostly low refrains
Calling vainly for Heathcliff again and again
Across the purple haze of indifferent heather.
Or Orpheus' muted lyre mourning
His final loss of Eurydice.

Tom Billsborough

The Sylph- From Paul Valery

Neither seen nor known
I am the scent
By the wind blown
Living and spent.

Neither seen nor known
Chance or spirit
Is hardly sown
And the task complete.

Neither seen nor grasped
To the best minds
What errors are promised.

Neither seen nor known
Time of a bare bosom
Between two smocks.

Tom Billsborough

The Troll Returns

Thank you, Thicky, for giving me another 260 points (including this message) . Saves me the trouble of writing poems. you really are the densest person on God's Earth! Still, I can't complain. It's idiots like you that make the rest of us feel better about ourselves.

Have a nice day when you squirm out of your hole.

Tom Billsborough

The Urn Jacques Dupin

Constant watching as the second night
Comes up across this clear and sluggish pyre
Which bringing of the ashes does not temper.

And yet the final mouth, the mouth so full
Of earth and rage, recalls itself to be
The burning one and guides the cradles on the river.

Tom Billsborough

The Voyage

THE VOYAGE

For a child obsessed by maps and prints
The Universe matches his vast appetite.
How large the world seems by lamplight
How miniscule in memory!

One day we leave, our brains so full of flame
Hearts swollen with rancour and bitter desires.
And we travel following the rhythm of waves
Cradling infinity on the finite seas.

Some, glad to leave an infamous country,
Others, their cradle's horror, and some
Astrologers drowned in a woman's eyes:
Circe the tyrant with her seductive perfumes.

Tom Billsborough

The Whole Soul

The whole soul epitomized
When slowly we breathe it out
In several smoke rings
Vanishing in other rings.

It attests to some cigar
Burning skilfully provided
The ash is separate
From its bright kiss of fire.

So the choir of our romances
Flies to the lips.
Exclude from, if you start,
The real because it is base.

A meaning too precise
Erases your discrete literature.

Tom Billsborough

The Wild Bunch

Come down from the hills, ye dogs
And eat ye of flesh
Came Cameron's battle cry.

Tom Billsborough

The Yule Festival

In time there is no time, in place no place,
Only the stillness
As we await the pivotal dawn,
Suppliant as slack water at the tide's turn.
A thin wind whines, bitter as sloe,
Anointing our heads with relentless snow
In the sacred grove beneath the lights
Of the oak and the white mistletoe,
Beneath the full moon, whose phases
Only the women know.
So they control the ritual.
As daylight breaks we sing in praise
Of the rebirth of the longer days.
Robed in red, the mother priestess says:
'Now the White Goddess comes to rule
We celebrate this festival of Yule,
The rebirth of the sun
And of life for the year to come
In the eternal cycle
Here with this ritual.'
Then Maid and Mother and the priest
Process three times round the grove
In clockwise fashion as the sun
Until the Maiden stands alone
Before the black-robed crone,
And says: 'The tide has turned, O crone.
I come to claim what is my own.'
The crone in black will pass her veil
To the white-clad Maiden with a smile:
'The days grow longer, the sun reborn,
My season's ended, yours is yet to come.
Heed the counsel of the years,
Be wise and bold and have no fears,
I bid you, gentle one... and Blessed be.'
The Maid stands tall before the tree
And holds her candelabrum high
And sings a gentle melody:
'O, Goddess Moon, my sister now,
Grant us your favours of great joy,

Of love and peace and harmony
To all the world and Blessed be! '

Tom Billsborough

They Still Write To Him!

In a little post-box
Letters await Rimbaud,
Poet of Ardennes
Who died so long ago.
Only in his verses,
Will he arise again
Where blue air washes flowers
Beyond his window-sill.
And does he listen still
To those two loving sisters
Whose lashes darkly fluttered
Below the scented silence,
His trance engendered
By their smell of rosy honey
As, poised above his head,
With skilful silver fingers
They cracked the lice
Within his hair
As he lay in his bed.

Tom Billsborough

Thinking Of Anne Sexton

You tear at every fibre of my being,
Every hurt exposed to public view
The depth of suffering
Almost past our bearing
But lovers of true verse, love you.
I often read your poem, Doctor Martin,
And wish I had the courage that you own,
How much your tortured introspection
Moves me to many tears once again.

Tom Billsborough

Thinking Of Neil Armstrong

Enduring light and often
Mirror of my solitude,
You watch me and I watch you
When cloudy curtains part
And I perceive your
Barren moonscape.
Oh, goddess, truly virgin,
In my heart
Until a bouncing astronaut,
His mission half complete,
Expressed a child's delight
And you became
The trampoline of night!
And how we shared his joy,
This boy of bounding courage,
I still reflect with gratitude
His steps which brought
A further magic to the moon.

Tom Billsborough

Thoughts In Spring

Each piece of falling blossom
Diminishes the Spring.
It's sad to see the petals
Fly off in the wind.
Yet glad am I
To let my eyes
Rest on what still remains.
Quite guiltily, I drink my wine
While kingfishers dive incessantly
Around the small pavilion,
Raised on the River's bank.
And there by a grave mound,
Out on open ground
Stands an unicorn in stone.
Nature always calls us
To join her in her home.
So why should I care for lures
Of ephemeral wealth and honor?

Tom Billsborough

Three Graces Of The Seas

Farne Isles- Grace Darling

Amazing Grace - John Newton

Aussie - Grace Bussell

Tom Billsborough

Three In A Bed

Delicate purple,
Cuckooflowers, slim maidens
Shy, three in a bed.

Tom Billsborough

Tides

The sea, the sea, always returning,
The blood reoxygenating,
Creators of dreams
As the pure salt of an apt phrase
Regenerates our themes.
How my eyes widen over these dark seas,
Misusing the myth of eternity
As sand structures flatten.
The sea, the sea always returning.

Tom Billsborough

Time You Were Back In Ithaca, Mate

Calypso's swaying to and fro
Weaving magic on her loom
And with her lips a song so sweet
Now glues him to his web of doom.
And lying on his couch of down
The one who foaled the Trojan Horse
Quite hypnotised, Odysseus,
By her subtle intercourse.

Tom Billsborough

Tirol In Late Autumn

I recall the soft white pastures
Etched out between the fells,
Which spilled their darker tones
Down slopes like forest groupings.
I recall the unique gestures
Of snowflakes in the breeze
Metallic Matin bells
Now ringing through the trees.
And on the window panes
Frost spread its bony hands,
Its print of bones outside,
Its admittance still denied.
Cow bells echoed and the whistle blew
As soon the morning train
Chugged up the slopes from Innsbruck
Towards the Mutteralm.
A Lady passed and said "Gruss Gott";
And I returned her greeting.
Her cheeks were blossoming with cold
As I recall that meeting.
And briefly did I turn
As her footsteps etched the meadow.

Tom Billsborough

To A Certain Lady

Your smile is my subliminal light.
Your voice the chlorophyll,
Instilling growth
Within the garden of my dreams.
What flowers I presume to raise,
I raise for you and you alone.
My neurons sing like happy bees
And may my honeyed tones
Touch you as you touch me.

Tom Billsborough

To A Fly

So circumspect the fly
Which studies in minutiae
The many consoles
Of his mission space control...
God's all seeing eye
inspects me from my palm..
And calmly kneels as if in prayer.
I can only stare.
Is this an act of idiot faith
Or the cool dare
Of an insolent creature?

Tom Billsborough

To A Plane Tree

Shadow my soul
With your delicate fronds,
O tree so tall
Outreaching the bonds
Of the nourishing soil.
Shadow my soul
As you sway to the rhythm
Of the uplifting breeze
And dream to reach some ultimate goal
Beyond the compass of my philosophies.
Shadow my soul
In this glade of pure silence
wherein your essence
Nourishes my soil.

Tom Billsborough

To Australia

Ten pints of Ale
Afore we roam across the boisterous sea.
Ten for me and ten for thee
Before we hoist the sail.
A little hornpipe or a jig
To set us on our way.
We're off to take the convicts
Across to Botany Bay

Tom Billsborough

Toby Or Not Toby

The pottery of earth is often found
In broken shards below the ground.
We excavate old sites
And piece together
The buried pieces of our history.
Our own as well! Our memories
Which scatter in those regions
Of our mind lie buried too,
Our private archaeology
Which others might explore
Hypnotically.
But will they bring to bear
Sufficient care
To avoid distorting what is there
Or will a careless input sway
And damage irreparably
Our shards of history?

Tom Billsborough

Today

I watch the sea breathe in its back-combed waves.
The stars recede, concede dawn's blossoming,
The moon-spectre's fading smile
Gradual as the onset of sorrow.
The ferry ploughing and the seagulls
Squawking as they stalk its whitening harrow,
And the light's pale ochre farrowing
The Clouds and its rays
Absorbing the mists of yesterday.

Tom Billsborough

Top Banana

A banana in a tutu
Loved to pirouette
But what he really dreamed of,
Was somewhere to get wet.

He told his mates the other day
A bunch said he was daft
To shed his lovely yellow skin
And use it as a raft.

But down the Colorado
And now completely nude,
He braved white water rapids
This fruit with attitude.

But sadly for our hero
He tripped into a pool
Of slowly cooling custard.
He's now banana fool.

Tom Billsborough

Touch

Is there no rubric to govern this séance?
No subtle science to delete chance?
Where love's music without pause
Sways us in unison
Until the dance is complete.

No! We must be content
With tactile choice,
The gambler's instinct
And his confidence,
And if by chance we lose the chase,
We use the gambler's smooth excuse.

Tom Billsborough

Toujours Demain

Je me regarde en pied
Devant le miroir.
Tiens! Quel type!
Je suis aussi gros qu'une
Vérité politique
Et fichu comme l'as de pique.
Eh quoi! Je dois affûter la forme.
Demain? Oui, demain est toujours
Parfait pour prendre une décision sérieuse.
Ce matin, cependant, j'irais au bistro
Pour mes six tasses de café
Et mon gâteau énorme
Avec une flopée de crème fraîche
Et demain je vais y réfléchir demain.

Tom Billsborough

Transsexual

How does it really feel now
To have your life-force neutered?
Do you truly grow
Into that new sex of your childhood dreams?
Or have you only
Achieved a state of limbo?
For sure, the doll's house has a new door,
And the attic a new window,
But the old furniture remains,
Redundant now, entombed
Within the same old rooms,
Seedless or with an unreachable womb.

Tom Billsborough

Tribute To Louise Labe By Oliver De Magny

Oh, the brown and lovely eyes of my mistress.
Oh, the mouth, the face, eyelashes and tress,
Oh the laugh, the stature, the song and the voice
And you, of the graceful features I adore
Remembering those other times I now rejoice
To see and hear you now I wish the more,
As I have done in earlier months by choice.

Tom Billsborough

Tribute To The Greatest-Muhammad Ali

He came, he saw, he conquered our hearts.
With his weaving magical boxing arts.
And when he was downed by Henry's great hammer
He picked himself up in his professional manner
And saw the bout off in the round he predicted.
From that day forward we became addicted
To this handsome fellow with his lively lips
His wicked smile and his printable quips
Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee,
Poet in motion and in rhyme gloriously.
We'll never forget you this side of the pond
Your fame will remain for centuries beyond,
Rest now, our friend, a true gentleman,
So loyal to your soul, your race has been won!

Tom Billsborough

Trick Or Treat

Innuendos, darkly the shadows lurk there
Where the pumpkin lanterns now flicker bright flames
Hooded ghosts appear in their sheeted attire.
Kids at the window!

Tom Billsborough

Trolleybus No.1

There are no ded... oops Sorry. Someone at the door.
Byeee...

Tom Billsborough

Trolleybus No.2

aH, MY NEW BOOK...now where was I? uctions, that's it!
There are no ded.. Oh flip, don't have your address..Pity, good book on Brain
Transplants.

Tom Billsborough

Trolleybus No.3

Sorry to be so long. Some of us have lives, unlike you in your worm hole. Now what type of brain shall you have. Chimpanzee?

No, far too advanced. Oh, about a worm's brain. Suit you fine.

Bye, Bye for now, thicko!

Tom Billsborough

Trolling Along Again

So you're at it again
The one with no brain.
I'd teach you a tune called delete and submit
But i'm afraid you're too thick to ever get it.
It's holiday time so I'll rest a while
Reaping the benefits with a rather smug smile.
Just give me three weeks, you tedious old crone,
And all your stupidity will be undone.
If PH take action which I rather doubt
You'll find that you are quite permanently out.

Tom Billsborough

True Hunger

Hunger makes dreams.
Themes constantly recreate
Images that revolve
In my mind's kaleidoscope.
Last night I wandered down a street
Composed entirely of chocolate:
Dark for the brickwork,
Milk for the roofs and sills,
White for the mortar and the drains.
The windows, dull, opaque
However had the appearance of cling-film.
I had a sudden sense of terror,
Wondering what witch lurked under cover
In her sweet abode
Thinking me much to her taste.
I strode onwards to a new horizon
Where a field of poppies clothed my fear
And the street behind melted into oblivion.
If hunger brought the image on,
It was a momentary pang.
And later on I thought how trivial my fear
When I consider those whose dreams
Must circle round a bowl of rice,
Clutching at the entrails of despair,
Those who live each day
In the awful grip of hunger.

Tom Billsborough

Truth

Penny for your thoughts
And your reply? Bare-faced lie.
I love all of you!

Tom Billsborough

Turkey Eating Hot Water Bottle

In my house of daub and wattle
I like to call my home
I have a water bottle
Which keeps my knees quite warm.

It's black and big and furry
I call it Mister P.
I feed it on Fresh Turkey
It means the world to me.

I used to have a palace
Before my bottle came
Where Lords and Ladies showed their face
And once or twice the Queen.

But thanks to Mister Purry
And his great appetite
My fortune's in the slurry
But he keeps me warm at night.

In my house of daub and wattle
I like to call my home
I stroke my water bottle
And Purry starts to purr!

Tom Billsborough

Tutankhamun

Anubis calls and predators stir.
The jackals raise their heads and cry
And penetrate the desert air
Across the mauve horizon.
And soon the carrion of goats
Will be the carcasses of boats
A sea has jettisoned.
You stare as grains of sand
Pour through your hands
As time yawns in waves of sound
across your yellow lands,
Where winds reshape the dunes
And build you castles of security.
Anubis calls. The jackals cry.
The predator's astir within your being.
Your bones now crack the silence,
Boy King, Tutankhamun,
Your doom the price of incest.

Tom Billsborough

Tweeting

Some people write 140
No more is allowed.
I feel that even 20
Is far too long
For a network so inane.
The human brain
Craves brevity
When reading the mundane.
Three words are quite sufficient.
Sharp as a knife.
Like "Get a Life."

Tom Billsborough

Uncertainty

Particle, wave...

How will it behave?

By choice or by chance

Uncertainty's persistence,

In the mind's micro world

As decisions unfold.

"The road not taken" as Frost would say

The scheme abandoned at the break of day.

The song unwritten as a dream fades away.

Choice of words like the latest dance

Is a matter of a moment's consequence

And often just chance.

Tom Billsborough

Une Berceuse

Je t'aime bien, mon chéri.
Tu es ma fleur qui fleurit.
Tu es très beau.
Tu es mon oiseau
Qui apprend à voler.
Tu es mon âme renouée.
Je t'aime, bien, mon chéri.
Dors bien, mon enfant,
Dors bien, maintenant.

Tom Billsborough

Une Femme Fait Magique

Elle se penche
Contre un mur complètement vert.
La bouche est ouverte
Chantant un poème très doux.
Et quand je l'approche,
Elle touche ce mur en pierre
Et une porte a magiquement apparue.
Elle me fait signe et à la fois
Je suis étourdi et séduit.
Par les nombreux parfums exotiques.
Elle sourit et chante comme elle danse
Comme une ballerine,
Une danse bien sublime,
Le long d'un chemin clair
A travers les arbres.
Dans un état de stupeur,
Je suis et nous arrivons à un creux
où les elfes avec bonnets verts
Sont assis sur leurs champignons rouges
Et les fées dansent en cercle,
Chantant doucement tant que les fleurs roses
Tombent doucement des grands arbres d'amande.
Je reste pendant un certain temps
Dans cette clairière enchantée
Jusqu'à ce qu'il est temps d'aller.

« Puis-je revenir, » je la demande.
« Ah, oui, mon cheri, » elle sourit.
« mais comment pourrai-je vous trouver? » je demande.
« Oh, vous ne pouvez pas me trouver,
Mais je peux toujours vous trouver,
tant que vous avez la foi
Que ce que vous avez vu est vrai »

Tom Billsborough

Unity

Oh, holy Ganges,
Many faiths flood your delta
Joining in the sea.

Tom Billsborough

Upon The Shore

Constant watching as the sea begins
Its mantras once again
And I remain immobile on the shore,
As the sea breeze blows my memory away
And the now holds sway.
I close my eyes and all is light.
Immanent non- being.
No words may pass in flight
As seagulls on the wing.
No images or thoughts
Transgress the stillness there.
Pure peace descends upon the shore.

Tom Billsborough

Valentine Card

I felt it right to pen these lines
And wish you all sweet Valentines.
No doubt you'll all get quite a lot,
Sack-fulls brought by Postman Pat.
You'll scratch your heads and make a fuss
To know who wrote, anonymous,
A loving message all in rhyme
Better than this one of mine!

Tom Billsborough

Vikings

On sharp black rocks the sea sloughs,
Snaking new channels, sharp as its abrading sound.
Its profound insidious motion cleaving hollows
As the living brain shapes pathways
For its new endeavours,
Its exploratory fervour.
I am this restless ocean of extravert desires
And introverted fears, a tidal being,
As the sharp, black bow cleaves the passive sands
My writhing consciousness alert
Extends outwards to the doubly curved horizon
As pale blue from the dark gradually unfolds
And the red lips of dawn shape new ideas,
And back towards the shore, my cries are echoing
That abrading sound, that vision of the conqueror.

Tom Billsborough

Villanelle

I have lost my turtle-dove:
Is she not the one I hear
I must go and find my love.

You pine for her, the one you love
And so do I, I fear.
I have lost my turtle dove.

If you love will never move
My faith also is clear
I must go and find my love.

Your grief will always move,
And I too grieve, my dear
I have lost my turtle-dove.

I see no more my treasure trove
Nothing fairer is there here
I must go and find my love.

Death, for which I call above,
Is now my only one desire!
I have lost my turtle-dove
I must go and find my love.

Tom Billsborough

Virginity

Virginity, virginity,
Where are you now.
Who suddenly left me.
Never again to return.
No, never again.
No, never again.

Tom Billsborough

Voodoo

If you knew Voodoo, like I know Voodoo..
Oh, oh, oh oh my beautiful doll..
Dressed only in your Tutu, I have it in for you.
Shall I stick some pins in you?
That would be quite droll.
If you knew Voodoo, like I know Voodoo..
Oh my sore bottomed troll.

Tom Billsborough

Waking

In the hot light of day
There is no reality
Only in our dreams.

Tom Billsborough

Walpurgis Night

Light the beacons on the fells.
Let the Beltane fires blaze
Like cockerel combs as red as dawn.
Dress the hallowed wells
With yellow flowers, broom and mallow!
Raise the maypole with its trimmings
Dance around it in a circle,
Singing anthems as you spin
To greet the Queen of May,
Our mistress on this holy day.
Lead the cattle by their reins
Between the flickering flames
Of purifying fires.
Leap across them, those who dare.
Bring out the crystal ball
And those who wish may peer
Into its heart and reveal to all
The images they see.
Be they joyful, Blessed be.

Tom Billsborough

War Horse

The Ferghana horse of Bactrian breed
Is short of leg but built for speed.
Ears sharp, alert standing erect,
Its barrel chest exuding power
And at full gallop it will subject
The wind to its commanding grace
And distance disappears
To nothingness at its great pace.
Its stamina is legendary
And its courage will carry
You on mythical journeys
In just a single day.

Tom Billsborough

Water Music

Singing by the warbling water,
Below the plashing waterfalls,
Who becomes the true composer
In the mingling of our souls?
Is my anthem to the river
An echo of the purer tones
Which only Nature can deliver
Upon its fluted polished stones?

Tom Billsborough

Waters Of Peace

A hard black rock divides this stream,
Creating waves of friction.
And yet in time the rock dissolves
By the water's slow persuasion.
If all the eddies, all the swirls,
Could bring their force together
With wills that work in unison
Things would resolve much sooner.
I know a man who had a dream
That spoke of Love's solution
A man of patience and of calm,
Let's heed his valediction.

Tom Billsborough

What An Epitaph

Mary McGiven

Who made love for a living

Now lies in Heaven!

Tom Billsborough

What Is Terror?

Drilled holes,
Blood stains silent shattered walls,
Abrupt terror reimposed
By schisms or distortions of faith,
Or blind tyranny of Omerta,
In the name of honour.
What are the triggers?
Imposed alien cultures
Land settled by force of arms
To the exclusion of owners?
Construction of walls between peoples?
The same shattered and silent walls,
Red stains spreading from drilled holes,
And rag dolls tossed aside
By tornedos of terror.

Tom Billsborough

What's In A Poem?

Each word's a chord,
A tone, a colour,
Juxtaposing images and sounds
In harmonising order,
Assonance the flats to mollify the song
Alliteration sharps,
The plangent plucking of a harp,
Half rhyme I use
To vary the length and pitch of lines,
And introduce a complex contrapuntal strength.
As one creating landscapes
Uses tones and focal points
To give perspective to the whole.
The soul is in the metre,
Echoing below as some elusive rhyme,
The constant footfall
Of the Alexandrine.
Subtle variations are allowed,
But still its shadow must remain,
Governing the flow of each refrain,
To counterpoint again.

Or do we write just as we feel,
Our instinct using patterns
Once instilled by memories
And habit, in ignorance
Of analysing and retrospective theories!
Perhaps the great G Minor Fugue,
Or Eliot's lyrics,
Or the prosody of French verse lurk
Within my mind's
Subliminal self and do the work!
What puzzles me is how the songs begin
Not how they end
Or the subtle tricks played
In between created
Like movements in a dance.
Remote control, I'm told,
Precedes each thought,

So perhaps we ought not claim
The credit or take the blame!

Tom Billsborough

Where Are The Snows Of Yesteryear?

Where the fair Helen, destroyer of Troy?
Where Cleopatra, seducer of Rome?
Where Saint Joan, deliverer of France?
And where Eleanor, the Queen of Romance
The subject of many a jongleur's song,
Who loosed upon Henry her fiery brood,
Released at last by her favourite son.

Where are the women whom we revere?
Where are the snows of yesteryear?

And what of Beatrice, the ideal woman?
And Louise Labe, who wrote with true feeling?
And Marie Curie, discoverer of Radium?
And Emmeline Pankhurst, whose courage won freedom?

Where are the women whom we revere?
Where are the snows of yesteryear?

Always remembered, as women should be,
As equal creators of our long History.

Tom Billsborough

Where Have All My Pointies Gone

Six-eighty five, there's no such Time
But it has a bearing on this rhyme.
It's the number of points that have gone astray
On two successive Saturdays.
It could be that they're icy cold,
Locked in a dungeon mighty old,
With only bits of bread and water
Donated by their kidnapper.
But before you sob, before you cry,
I've called upon the Hunter guy
To find these little chaps for me
So far no news, Oh dearie me!
But certain that he'll heed my call
And be upon the proverbial ball.
If not, these poems may multiply
Until I know I'm home and dry
With some replacement points, you see,
Though the last souls stay in misery!

Tom Billsborough

White Water

White water rapids, black rocks polish fear.
The plunging sensations,
And the dying falls
The water exploding like shells
Against our canoe's thin walls
Twisting and turning
For each eddy and clue
As the torrent torments
With its elusive current.
Paddles dig in as we seek to control
The animal wildness of each new fall.
At last we find an area of calm
With aching shoulders and sores on each palm.

Tom Billsborough

Who Am I?

I am only one and yet
My mathematics soar
Towards infinity
In my discrete enclosure,
My nebula of atoms.
Each nerve a star
Which radiates a purpose.
I am but one and wonder at my role.
Is it active or just
The passive recall
Of an automated system,
Infinitely complex,
Beyond my comprehension?
Am I the one illusion,
The one Imagined God
Created by my infrastructure?

Tom Billsborough

Who Are Your Heroes?

Who are your heroes of yesterday?
Mine are mostly of my youth,
And some before. Take Babe Ruth.
Died when I was three and yet
The Sultan of Swat
Is a name I shall never forget.
And then there is Elvis
Who gave such joy
When I heard his rendition
Of the song "Danny Boy";
Ali, of course, adored over here,
Bright with a wink, cool with a stare.
And then there is Bradman,
King of the bat,
You lads from down under
Will know where I'm at!
So who are your heroes?
I would love to know.
Go on you members
Give it a go!

Tom Billsborough

Wild Geese

A skein of wild geese
Vaporize in azure skies
O brief melody.

Tom Billsborough

Windmill

Wind breathes upon the tall sails,
Which take the weight and creak
Into slow rotation,
And as the breeze strengthens
Gather momentum
Transferring their natural power
To the granite stones which grind the grain,
Unseen from where I stand
The rotary motion of the blades
Commanding my attention,
Compelled to silence
By the windmill's rhythm.
Some things you see
With clarity
But some you must imagine
Working deep within our minds
As cogs and ratchets spin
Within the walls of this white tower
To make the necessary flour.

Tom Billsborough

Windy Day

Tall winds wall in
The vibrant soul.
Short of breath I seek
Shelter in the deciduous wood
Close by where branches
Tremble in the assonance of shadows,
And their leaves resonate
With consumptive colours,
And sparrows huddle
In the lee of willows,
Where I too share their cover,
Feeling we are together.

Tom Billsborough

Winter

When the stream freezes
There is no sound or motion
Just your voice echo.

Tom Billsborough

Wish

Only your warm heart and nothing more.
My paradise would be a field
With no nightingale or lyre
With an unassuming river
And a small fountain there.

Without a spur of wind over the foliage
Or a star pretending to be a leaf.
A great light, glow-worm of another,
In a field of broken glances.

A serene rest, where our kisses,
Resounding specks of the echo
Would open far away.

And your warm heart, nothing more.

Tom Billsborough

Witches

Therefore they suppressed
Woman's natural magic..
Men of a dead Faith.

Tom Billsborough

Without Discrimination

Do not break promises or lacerate trust.
The cuts to others open furrows in your own flesh.
By lacerating their hopes you destroy the bases
on which the world rests.
The distrust you induce kills love. The child
prisoner in his dreams sticks needles in the desire to be.
he knows not how to separate Time from wound or delirium from Dawn.
He knows not that he is the goldfish announcing
the sublime outbreak of the goal.
If, by advancing, you discredit the steps of others, those
curses leap from your mouth to your soul and corrode it.
Teach your eyes to bless what they see.
You are an indivisible unit inside, the separation is a
mirage that devours.
With an empty chest, stare into the background
to find your star.
Respect the illusions of those who submit to your effluvia, teach them to die
sinking in the heights.

Tom Billsborough

Word Doodling

Pigs will consume pigswill. Will you?
Larks lark in the blue yonder.
I ponder.
Matter matters. Water splatters.
Pitter patters. Rain reigns
Except on desert plains,
And Arabella raises her pink umbrella.
Whilst home on the range
Buffalos cook. Or are cooked, Oh dear!
A deer's kin I call Venison,
Strong meat only Scots eat in Glen Morrison.
Cows could chew cuds producing Methane.
Me? Thane? No, me King of the castle,
So no hassle from you, matey.
I'm King and I'm well read, I said.
Not true, said Ted, Yer jest a big head, Fred.
Off with his head, I cried!

Tom Billsborough

Writer's Block

Headlights glare,
The bold white stare of paper!
My mind will not reorder
Words to suit a song.
How long?
How often must this occur?
This disobedience of the brain.
The stain of my neglect
Spreads out inexorably
Across the white wall of my consciousness.
Oh, reader, do you know
How much I long
To recreate a song
From all this present absence?

Tom Billsborough

Writers' Block

It's the question's quality that matters.
And the unquestioned answers
That disturb me as the blank page accuses
But my mind refuses
To unscramble the perpetual Jigsaws.
There is no sense of order. Flaws
Appear in the remembered structure.
There is no picture
To guide the placement of pieces.
The mind releases
Its atoms of words but no songs appear.
I begin to fear it's not just a question of answers
But the absence of questions also.

Tom Billsborough

You Tell Him, Rapunzel!

I rode to the castle
And called to her there:
"Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down your fine hair."
Instead of an answer
From my lovely fair maid
A bucket appeared
And an awful cascade
Which dampened my ardour.
And I felt a right drip.

"Last time, she screamed
You came in a Lada."
Now you've down-sized
To that mangy old horse.
No doubt tomorrow
It'll be something worse
Something like you,
You great silly Ass!
So you'd better get working.
You're not worth a dime
If you don't turn up
In a stretch limousine! "

Tom Billsborough