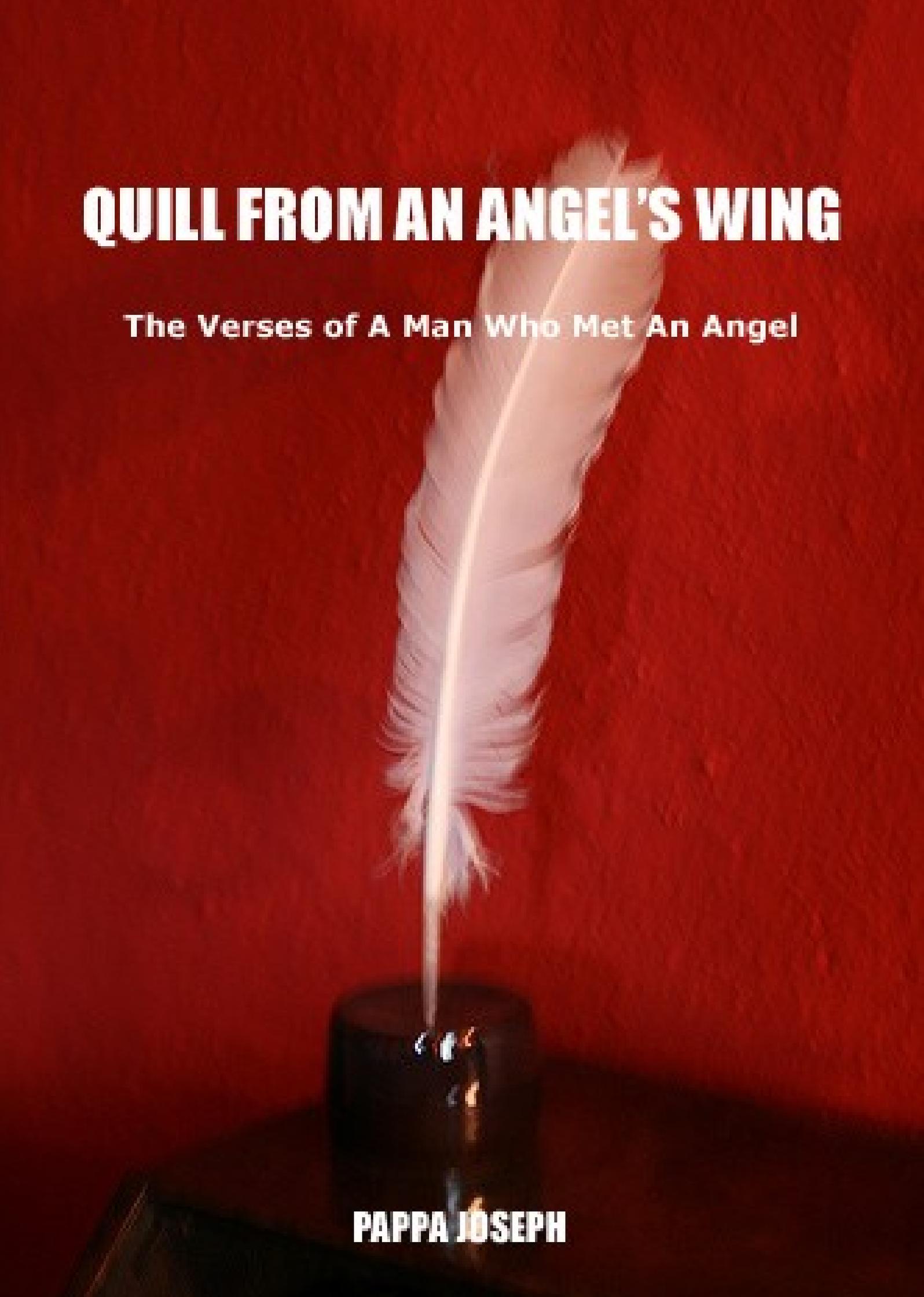


QUILL FROM AN ANGEL'S WING

The Verses of A Man Who Met An Angel

A white quill pen is shown vertically, resting in a black holder. The quill is the central focus, with its fine tip pointing downwards. The background is a solid, deep red color. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the quill's feathers.

PAPPA JOSEPH

Quill From An Angel's Wing

The Verses of A Man Who Met An Angel

A SERIALIZED BOOK BY PAPPAS JOSEPH

Quill From An Angel's Wing *The Verses of A Man Who Met An Angel*

First Published 2014

Also by Pappa Joseph

Now or Never *Parenting Without Remorse*

Idiotic English and Idiomatic English

The Professional's Guide to Using English Correctly, Intelligently and Influentially

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PREFACE

The poems I write are an ethereal expression of my thoughts crystallized in exhilarated language. Most of them were written in moments of spontaneous rapture; several, especially the blithe verses, are deliberate creations extruded from imaginations stirred by random sights and thoughts that graced their way into my heart.

Diffuse verse or terse prose, the one common element in my writings is my constant sense of an angel's presence close by. My own spirit decides what to write, but a silent voice seems to counsel me in how best to express what I desire to communicate.

My first verses were written in 1972, when life began to turn poetic upon fair acquaintance with a new kindred soul. Thereafter, the poems were sporadic, and a very few even spasmodic in the days of my great afflictions. I think there is at least one verse for each stage of my life that emotionalizes my attitudes and perceptions of that season of my sojourn on earth. The poems are arranged datewise, the newest at the foremost.

I wasn't initially keen to publish my poems, as I was not sure whether they merited the time and attention of the audiences of my other messages. But I thought I will just put them up anyway; if after being published online, sufficient response warrants it, I will continue to add to the collection; if not, I will pull them down to make way for other messages.

Pappa Joseph

QUILL FROM AN ANGEL'S WING

The Verses of A Man Who Met An Angel

I'll Run Down the Mound

In the day when my shackled feet are no more bound
I'll rush to a dreamy green slope in some hidden dale
And then with a whee I'll run down the mound
With outstretched arms back to the verdure vale

In the day when my Lord frees my soul from this prison of ages
I'll free my heart from its confined cages
Rush up with glee to a snow laced mount
And toboggan down with shouts springing from my soul's fount

When my soul one day is able to soar high to the skies again
And my restrained dreams can take wings to the pearly isles
I will discover anew the wonders that filled my little eyes
I will run up and down the earth and I'll be a child again.

October 29 2013

My Own Footprints in the Sand

(With Apologies to the Author of 'Footprints in the Sand')

One night I had a dream
I was walking on the sandy bank
Of a turbulent stream
In a forest land dark and dank
But all I could see were my footprints on the sand
As my soul trudged on to reach my Fatherland

As I walked on and on without end
Only the promise of my Lord
That he is ever my faithful friend
Kept me safe like a flaming sword

Across the ominous sky flashed lightning
And thunderous roars threatened my very being
But with each deafening clap in my ear
My Lord's words calmed my every fear:

'I will never forsake thee nor leave thee
And though on narrow paths thou walk alone
And face fearsome tempest from the devil blown
My eyes will never turn away from thee'

'If that be so', I told Him who assured me
'Then let me see thy footprints on this sand
Till I am safely out of this alien land
Then I will know I walk not alone but with thee'
From then on through the frightening times
The lightening and the thundering were but chimes

QUILL FROM AN ANGEL'S WING

That tolled my victories in the valley of trial
And when the storm and the stream conspired
To sweep my steps away at every mile
The sight of my Lord's footprints always inspired

Until dawned the darkest day of this war
When I needed him beside me than ever before
Then saw I only one set of footprints on the sand
Perhaps, I thought, he was carrying me in his hand
As I now passed through life's hardest day
So I bent down to see the lone footprints
O, my soul, now thy name is surely Dismay!
For clearly they were but my own sole prints

As I staggered in the severe tempest
I feared the stream would be my watery grave
To the Lord I cried out without a moment's rest
'Lord, where are thy footprints that kept me brave
Walk I alone now when I need thee the most?
Abandoned thou me when life turned the worst?

And out of the tempest came a soft still voice
'Thou now indeed walk alone, my precious son
And that, remember, is my deliberate choice
To make thy gait firmer in this final season
For thou art no more a child to walk by sight
Thou hast all thou need to face any fright
It's not thy walk on life's sodden banks that is thy end
It is thy walk with me in the golden land that I forever intend

QUILL FROM AN ANGEL'S WING

'Go on with thy walk, my beloved friend,
For, lo, it's now only a short length
And thou will soon reach the other end
My grace will be thy sufficient strength
See, all heaven waits with bated breath
As thou race through thy last stretch on earth'

March 21 2012

First Time and Last Time

There is for everyone who has taken the first breath of life
A time when he takes his last
A first flow of tears and the last shedding of them in his life
There is a first time a man sees a place
And the very last time he will ever see it
A time when he kisses someone for the first time
And a time when he kisses that person for the last time
There is a first time he sings a song
And a time he sings his last
There is a first time he sees someone he is going to love
And there is a last time he sees that person
A time when he first runs on eager legs
And a last time his legs could ever take him on a run
There is a first time he spends money on his own
And a last time he will ever use money on his own
There is a first time he walks out of his house
And a first time he walks back in to a waiting spouse
And there is a last time he will ever walk out of his house
And a last time he will ever walk back into his house
There is a first time he walks on his feet alone
And there is the last time he can walk on his own

We always know when it's the first time we see, we hear, we smell, we feel
something

We never know when it's the last time we see, we hear, we smell, we feel
something

QUILL FROM AN ANGEL'S WING

So, child, go have as many first times as possible
Do attempt things that seem at first impossible
And rejoice in every one of them, whether you lose or gain
For you can never know if you will ever have the chance again

August 21 2011

Lord, Spare Me From The Movies

Lord, spare me from the movies
From the songs and the ribaldries
Of drunken tech savvies
Creating their avatars
In warped nirvanas

Lord, spare me from the gravies
Thickened with coconut milkies
And bloodied by red chilies
Which gnaw away my intestines
And force me to daily take my quinines

November 19 2010

Written on the way to a distant place on a bus that showed
several local movies in full blast continuously.

The Afflicted Shepherd's Psalm 23

VERSION 2

The Lord is my slapper
I shall always want
He makes me to lie down on the hot rocks
He leads me into troubled waters
He breaks my soul
He leads me in the paths of sleeplessness
For His name's sake
Yea, though I walk with him through the valley of the shadow of death
I fear every evil
For you are far from me
Your rod and your staff, they are of no comfort to me
You prepare before me a table for my enemies
You annoy my head with soil
My cup is empty
Surely harshness and tears shall follow me
All the days of my life
And I will dwell in the house of sorrow
For long.

March 14 2010

Cages

In the house of the fowler
There are cages of all shapes
Kept in a chamber that admits no sunlight
In these cages square and round
Little shivering angels are bound
Warbling day and night
Their spirits yearn for perches in free altitude
As they languish each in his or her own cage
in deep solitude

January 19 2010

People Are Angry Everywhere

People are angry everywhere
They are lashing out at God
They are lashing out at Satan
Or they are lashing out at their dog
People are angry everywhere
They are lashing out at their neighbor
They are lashing out at their lover
They are lashing out at their child
Or they are lashing out at their father
People are angry everywhere
They are lashing out at something or the other
In every corner and at every hour

And some in the end
Are lashing out at themselves
In their own self they find their greatest fiend
Cutting themselves asunder
They finally end mashed up
Six feet under

January 19 2010

Abraham Lincoln's Letter to His Son's Teacher

[Prelude to Pappa Joseph's Letter to His Son's Teacher]

He will have to learn, I know,
that all men are not just,
all men are not true.
But teach him also that
for every scoundrel there is a hero;
that for every selfish Politician,
there is a dedicated leader...
Teach him for every enemy there is a friend.

Steer him away from envy,
if you can,
teach him the secret of
quiet laughter.

Let him learn early that
the bullies are the easiest to lick...
Teach him, if you can,
the wonder of books...
But also give him quiet time
to ponder the eternal mystery of birds in the sky,
bees in the sun,
and the flowers on a green hillside.

In the school teach him
it is far honorable to fail
than to cheat...
Teach him to have faith
in his own ideas,

QUILL FROM AN ANGEL'S WING

even if everyone tells him
they are wrong...
Teach him to be gentle
with gentle people,
and tough with the tough.

Try to give my son
the strength not to follow the crowd
when everyone is getting on the band wagon...
Teach him to listen to all men...
but teach him also to filter
all he hears on a screen of truth,
and take only the good
that comes through.

Teach him if you can,
how to laugh when he is sad...
Teach him there is no shame in tears,
Teach him to scoff at cynics
and to beware of too much sweetness...
Teach him to sell his brawn
and brain to the highest bidders
but never to put a price-tag
on his heart and soul.
Teach him to close his ears
to a howling mob
and to stand and fight
if he thinks he's right.
Treat him gently,
but do not cuddle him,
because only the test
of fire makes fine steel.

QUILL FROM AN ANGEL'S WING

Let him have the courage
to be impatient...
let him have the patience to be brave.

Teach him always
to have sublime faith in himself,
because then he will have
sublime faith in mankind.

This is a big order,
but see what you can do...
He is such a fine little fellow,
my son!

Pappa Joseph's Letter to His Son's Teacher

(With Apologies to Abraham Lincoln's Progeny)

He will have to learn, I know,
that no man is just,
no man is true.

But teach him also that
for every scoundrel there is a greater scoundrel;
that for every selfish politician,
there is a more wicked leader.

Teach him for every human enemy there are seven spiritual enemies.

Steer him away from every evil
if you can.

Teach him the secret of quiet endurance.

Let him learn early that
the bullies seem the most frightening to lick,
but teach him also that they are among the most frightened beings on earth
and that their bullying is an attempt to conceal their cowardice.

Teach him, if you can,
the worthlessness of books in gaining him true knowledge.

But also give him time for wonder,
to ponder the flight of birds in the sky, the path of
bees in the sun,
and the blossoming of flowers on a green hillside,
and to praise God for these wonders.

In the school teach him
it will always seem dishonorable among his teachers and mates to fail,
and that honor can often be obtained by cheating,
but nevertheless that he should choose to be dishonored than to cheat.

Teach him never to have faith

QUILL FROM AN ANGEL'S WING

in his own ideas,
even if everyone tells him
they are right,
but to have faith only in God's Word.
Teach him to be gentle
with both gentle people and tough people,
for if he is gentle only with the gentle,
how is he better than the sinner?
But teach him to be tough only with his own weaknesses.

Try to give my son
the strength to follow Truth
when no one else is getting on Truth's bandwagon.
Teach him not to listen to all that men say,
and teach him not to try to filter
all he hears through the sieve of human reasoning,
Cause human sieves often hold back sublime truths
Teach him, if you can,
how to cry when he is sad.
Teach him he may feel shame in shedding tears,
but to shed it nevertheless when he is sad.
Teach him never to scoff at cynics
and to beware of too much bitterness.
Teach him to never always sell his brawn
and brain to the highest bidders,
because the highest may not always be the best.
Teach him about the price-tag on his soul,
Made priceless by the bounty of God.

Teach him never to close his ears
to a howling mob

QUILL FROM AN ANGEL'S WING

for by keeping them open he may hear among the howls the cry of the
orphan and the widow in distress.

Teach him never to stand and fight
if he thinks he's right, but to move quietly away from the scene of conflict
and let the Lord fight for him.

Treat him with toughness if need be,
but cuddle him now and then lest he be dispirited,
for the power of love makes soft even fine steel tested by fire.

Let him have the courage
to be patient,
let him have the patience with himself if he is timid,
for in time he will be brave.

Teach him always never
to have sublime faith in himself,
because then he will have sublime faith in man who would sin for a loaf of
bread.

This is a big order,
So try not to wonder how you can do it,
For through the help of God
He can be such a fine little fellow,
my son!

June 6 2009

The Drunkard's Prayer

Our lager who art in tavern
Mellowed be thy fame
Thy merrydom come
Thy swill be done
On our hearth as it is in the tavern
Give this day our daily brew
Forgive us our spills
As we forgive those who spill on us
And lead us fast into intoxication
But deliver us from swell
For thine is the duncedom
And the pour
And the vainglory
For an hour
Ahh..mmm

February 14 2009

The Afflicted Shepherd's Psalm 23

VERSION 1

The Lord is my shepherd;
But I am always in want.
He makes me to lie down in hot places;
He leads me beside the troubled waters.
He exhausts my soul;
He leads me in the paths of stressfulness
For His name's sake.

Yea, I walk through the valley of the shadow of death;
I fear every evil;
For though you are with me
Your rod and staff, they do not comfort me.

You broke my prepared table in the presence of my enemies;
You burden my head with toil;
My cup is empty.
Surely leanness and anguish shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of affliction for long.

May 22 2008

Say Not the Struggle Naught Avaieth

By Arthur Hugh Clough, 1819–1861

[Prelude to The Struggle Naught Avaieth]

Say not the struggle naught avaieth,
The labor and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
It may be, in yon smoke conceal'd,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light;
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly!
But westward, look, the land is bright!

The Struggle Naught Avaieth

(With Apologies to Arthur Hugh Clough's Progeny)

The struggle naught avaieth,
The labor and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.

Hopes were dupes, fears weren't all liars;
It may be, in yon smoke conceal'd,
Your comrades e'en now are chased by the fliers,
And, but for you, flee the field.

While my tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the foe again.

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the fight;
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly!
But westward, look, the land is night!

The Way He Gnaws His Food

Only his mother and his guardian angels
Can behold the way he gnaws his food dipped in sauce
Watch the manner he opens and shuts his ravenous lips
Gaze at the changing contours of his crunching jaws
And weep in joy for a dining sight so divine

Every act of his ingestion
Repulses the world and me
Sours our palate and slows our digestion
But are life's sweetest scenes to behold with glee
For his mother and his guardian angels

August 10 2008

There Was A Time In My Life

There was a time in my life
When I used to walk on wooden clogs
And run barefooted in the summer bogs
Under the bright midnight moon.

There was a time in my life
When I would rush through the fields
And stop when I espy a nest of eggs in a bush
And wonder if they were brooded by a snake
Or by some fowl that had strayed from her coop.

There was a time in my life
When I beheld an eagle caught in our garden mesh
Flapping in pain her mangled wings
And struggling in vain to soar to the winds

I held the eagle gently between my hands
Took it to my friends and held her high
For them to see and gasp with admiration
But ere the sun had set that day
The mighty raptor was walloped again and again
With a bamboo pole and then with an iron hoe
Her head was finally bashed to pulp by a Tamil coolie
Who had looked deep into the eyes of the eagle
And said to my father
'She brings ill premonition'.

QUILL FROM AN ANGEL'S WING

There was a time in my life
I climbed to the eaves of our house
To peer into the nest of a sparrow
And discovered three spotted eggs
The eggs were snatched from their height
And nestled safely in my table's drawer
Could a boy's heart ever know
That three little lives would never see light
Nor ever take flight from the eaves of our house
Because of his kindly act.

And there was also a time in my life
I ate a jungle squirrel caught by our feline
And cooked in saline flavored with beef stock

And a time I savored a black gibbon
Shot by a gun toting villager
And skinned and sizzled in a wok
And served to us by our doting father.

June 10 2008

My Woman

Neither the moon glowing in her chaste beauty
Nor the stars casting furtive glances upon earth
Nor the sun in joyful radiance gazing upon his bride
Can begin to compare with my woman's beaming face

From her flows to me the quintessence of her purity
Issuing forth unknown to her, from her cheeks, her nose, her lips
From her deepest chambers which admit none but one in all eternity

Lord, can you recount from your gracious parade of creation
A being so divinely laced
As a woman graced by you

Can you from your infinite chambers find for man
Anything more awesome, more desirable than a woman
If you could, such a being would've long been here with man

How awesome the union you conceived for man and woman
How exquisite in the sight of all heaven
The bond that brings to birth a new man or a woman

If Man be God's most awesome creation
Then Women is the most awesome for Man

February 25 2002