

# *28 Poems*

**By Jamie W Spracklen**

***Summum nec metuas diam nec optes***

**Martial**

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## **Mirror Guru**

If I could look back without pity  
Upon the boy I once was,  
And mute his busy mouth with a scream,  
I would, and with no tears,  
No, no tears are left.

For in my every black reflective day  
Is a bitter reminder of what the  
Years have done to me, that boy.

With every damp choke of lust  
Squandered along the road-kill of life  
I lose something.

I break mirrors now.  
My slate eyes have no tomorrows left  
That I can bear to see.

## **56 Months**

Every day  
After the wasted pain  
Tell me what I have  
Left?

For my empire is dust  
And even my royal head  
Cannot keep all my  
Knock-about days  
Inside.

Every minute  
After the wasted guilt,  
Tell me what I have  
Left?

At my consecration,  
My anorexic heart leapt.  
Now your silence is a feast  
I cannot consume.

## **Catharsis**

Shall I count the days  
That the capillaries flexed towards  
The final, thoughtful purge?  
Could I show you the light  
Or the darkness in the notes of my bursting, singing  
heart?

I have committed myself to Catharsis,  
And down it's granite path,  
My knees are skinned to bones.  
It's a lazy lover though: late in coming and full of spite.  
But I shouldered the burden:  
Fought the streets and the dealers in your pain.

Twilight brings back my mind however;  
And the urge to squat in the embers of my pain,  
Turned away from the late sun that struggles  
Outside this cheap room.

## **Probing The Temple**

Horizontal to my fate each month,  
I urge the coming of dissolution,  
with a glee that some find distasteful.  
I embrace this coming sleep.  
One understands my mood however,  
the wicked step-mum of creation  
who decays the very stuff of strife,  
lay's low the mountains of greed,  
or the land that causes wars.  
Laughs at the idol's mirror  
And mocks the afflicted with  
firm flesh.

## **Slate**

In the long measure of your lungs  
stole a beauty, right out of town.  
It left you breathless in my smoky air.  
But I still had the sense to raise a glass  
and take sips with purple prose  
about the growing pain of  
damaged fairytales and the state of dirty tubes.

In the darkness between our hours,  
the slate is being wiped clean.

## **On Being Told Not Once, But Twice About The End Of The World**

under the shadow of our spreading chestnut tree  
the priest prays  
the swinger swings  
and the great unwashed  
try to count  
the  
R E P E A T S  
on  
T.V.

## **Standing Still Stone**

Eyes darkened against the hopeful sun,  
we raised our hopes to a cloudy day,  
standing still, like any patient stone,  
we looked on liked stone-age fools.

The sun, in shame, hid it's face,  
to some, completely, to other's, shyly,  
and while once, sarsen's were raised  
to honour you, Sol,  
now the multitude gawp and squint at your  
blessed light through cardboard.

## **Victims**

I saw the victims, lead in two's, side by side.  
I saw them all in the smoke of pride.  
I watched them torn, limb from limb,  
I even saw some try and hide.

But never could I stop the blade.  
Or catch the words that fell like rain,  
over the dead trust and spent lives  
I cried, yet felt no pain.

For I too am lead by the hand,  
up the stairs to the stained block.  
and if I was a victim here,  
I would hear my dead name,  
printed like a prayer  
to my fellow cattle  
that things must change.

## **We Went To It, With All The Passion Of Youth**

We went to it, with all the passion of youth,  
uplifting, holding, cradling our young livers  
in the sweet repose of the horizontal (or slumped).

We went fourth from the fortress of our age,  
singing mad, bad songs from our hearts,  
that seemed so full of rage.

We drank our rivers of tears dry,  
finding more, and losing some of what we were,  
and cheerfully, along the highway of years.  
we went to it, by the by.

## **In Agreement With Democritus**

I am an uncuttable stone  
That swims or flies,  
Laughs and stands still.  
Eternal, yet ear-sharp  
To change, a transit solid  
On its way from bladed grass  
To eye and back again.  
I have lived in all my parts  
A thousand souls or more,  
And yet, at the last,  
In my star-filled shoes,  
My parts have made me whole.

## **The Burning**

Your stuffed eyes, refuse to cry,  
and your parched throat, full of paper,  
will not twitch at the angry smoke.

You are crucified by innocents,  
awash with the blood from pages,  
written in haste or folly.  
Jeered or hawked by street corners,  
trundled by urchins, for spent coins.  
Bravely you ride the wooden throne  
of useless spite,  
to your baptism by fire and ozone.  
A mask settles upon a face long forgotten....

## **The Measure**

I have no yardstick to mark  
my worth by  
No rock to smash myself upon.  
No measure to set myself against,  
except for the humming in my veins  
to strive against the sleep of my fellow  
fodder.

## **Millennium Statement**

The poet would like it made known,  
that on the millennium, his statement is quite clear.  
For all his foolish words, or fiendish deeds, the  
one overriding thought resides in his empty skull:  
That, for each and every one of his fellow beings,  
this watershed, this span of years  
will spell in dark letters, in natural font,  
the whitewashing of all their fears.

## **The Armistice**

The whistle has been blown on my love,  
And up and over open ground,  
I've dodged sniping words,  
Or the retort of pistol answers.

Razor-wire wounds have bled,  
healed and burst again,  
And my mustard eyes will cry,  
Whilst my numb mouth burns machine-words.

When Armistice comes,  
Or I have done to death  
my brave enemy (with a kiss goodnight),  
The blood I've spilt will not wash off  
(with any of my usual words).

She will walk again though,  
Like any angel of Mons,  
Swift in justice of any design,  
To carry me West, in marble arms.

## **Midas**

Like any Midas, I cover  
my creations with complicated gold.  
A wash of cheap backdoor guilt  
that reflects my whiskey logic.  
And as amber infuses my gaze,  
you my pedestal goddess,  
are but a touch away,  
from my metal beating breast.  
As the last of my painful bleating  
prowls past you like hangovers and cars,  
desire is thick in my morning mouth,  
as I bite into my bitter feast.

## **Tree Talk**

Here we stand, you and I,  
facing a forest fire of lust.  
With a record of years  
in our brown breasts.

And man has touched you,  
and taken in haste the saw of his love,  
to your green heart.  
And I, in my wormy oak,  
have had his soft bark burned and kissed  
(and left his leaves for all to see).

Yet we fear not the axe,  
no, not us, in our leafy gloom,  
or the years that may rob us  
for, when we are windy and green  
our branches met in our silent grove,  
(were we plan to set down roots).

## **To My Lover**

In your arms,  
my darkness hides behind  
the sea-waves of my eyes.  
It loses itself in the  
crashes of my heart-strings,  
and joins any of my pain  
that lingered after the rain  
of your kisses.

## **A Moment Barred**

Past cares, and living with last nights fumes,  
I ride my democratic carriage  
to yet another urban town.  
And I spare none of my spite,  
for my midnight toxins,  
or save my angry bile  
at the unforgiving light.  
Yet, when my silent driver  
plies the brutish brakes  
I am shot forward to  
stare at you, and your dreaming son.

All benedictions of shadows  
die in your atomic love,  
and lie like the ugly dust  
in my breakfast mouth.  
I am stopped half-way  
through my aching curses,  
to witness some sort of goodness.

In quilt, I turn away,  
with strained red eyes.  
For I know, I'll never feel  
that way again.  
We rumble along, and my  
prayers change as my  
stained lungs and ironic heart  
take one last look at your love,  
and hope that your child never  
wakes, and sees any of my  
mornings.

## **Sermon**

In my father's house,  
there are many rooms.  
(And I have drunk in all of them.)

## **Subtext**

When night has come to my words,  
and my breath is used  
to speed my way,  
our subtext and collection of words will be read  
clearly between the lines.

## **To You, The Daylight Gathers**

To you, the daylight gathers,  
and I am bat-blind with  
burned fingers locked in  
the revel of touching.

To you, the daylight gathers,  
whilst back, in the critical dark,  
with my black minutes,  
my solitary eyes count  
lost seconds with virgin smiles.

To you, the daylight gathers,  
and though I should mourn  
my perished hours with vigour,  
I am deaf to father time.

To you, the daylight gathers,  
enamoured to the bedlam  
of your beauty yet  
dreary to the requiem between  
our bright assignments.

## **A Conversation Of Swears**

In your conversation of swears,  
rested a brave grandfather,  
full of metal and deafened by guns.

In your conversation of swears,  
lived a gunfighter, a devil and an  
Irish whore.

Yet still you grinned your  
yellow smile, and took an interest  
between your crude letters at me,  
here on my sad height,  
and kissed your husband,  
tight on whiskey and large on your love.

## **In Response To My Popular Art**

*“From raging moon I write  
On these spindrift pages...”  
Dylan Thomas - ‘My Craft or Sullen Art.’*

In response to my popular art,  
Wilfred’s words filled shell-holes  
and Dylan’s dog-green fuse  
ran the course of trees (and veins).  
In response to my popular art,  
brave men were crossed by worthless silver,  
and in fever George Gordon took a sword to Greece.

But,  
I in response to my popular art,  
stand at sodium corners,  
counting out my favourite syllables  
and soliciting like any other beggar,  
soldier-son or housewife,  
‘till I am noticed or undone.

## **Returning To Golgotha**

Returning to Golgotha,  
with lips thick with garden prayers,  
I see Simon coming home,  
with his heart full of splinters.

Returning to Golgotha,  
with bloody palms, full of past caresses,  
I see my bartered dignity  
disappearing on your life's throwboard.

Returning to Golgotha,  
wearing wounds like so much Stigmata,  
I look up at the slaughtered king  
who died, I'm told, for love.

## **Insistent Vernacular**

A hooligan rules my life.  
And against his insidious vandalism  
I am powerless to act.  
He's deliberate in his vision,  
Candid with his fraud  
And has no preference or  
Lack of gluttony  
Jocular always at his nightly feast.  
His blunt blades  
Reap with veteran hands.  
And the only pseudonym he needs  
Is named in my every murmur.

I'm on his knock-down list  
With my Judas body.  
Unable to stop the spraying  
Of my bright cellular name  
On his crowded bricks.

## **Waking Up**

Waking up,  
With clusters of hours before me,  
I turn, and see my last peace  
Disappearing with your stirring breath.

Waking up,  
I'm stealing my first drink of your beauty;  
a moment later, I'm back again,  
Thirsty at the well of your eyes.

Waking up,  
Turning and having to go,  
I walk over used blossoms  
That remind me of our spring,  
And smile.

## **Punch Bag**

When the fist comes home,  
I tread around the eggshells of my love  
And keep my lust inside.

## **Rent**

With bent back  
I toiled by night and day,  
And with each breath  
Another brick was laid  
And another window opened  
On my shell-shocked soul.

But my rude hands  
Could never find the secret mix  
Of water, blood, sweat and tears  
That you demand as rent  
On your borrowed lust.

Born in 1973, Jamie Spracklen began to write poetry and short stories in the early 90's and has appeared in many magazines and anthologies of verse the world over. A qualified archaeologist, Jamie is also the editor of two small press magazines, ***Monas Hieroglyphica*** and ***Visionary Tongue***, and is actively involved in the promotion of literature and artists the worldwide.

Recently Jamie won a national poetry prize for Ottakar's & Faber's Fifth Annual Poetry competition, and hosted a number of 'Open Mike' poetry evenings in London and Essex to provide a forum for up and coming poets. During 2002 Jamie hosted an evening of poetry with Bradford poet Joolz Denby.

Jamie's 1<sup>st</sup> collection of poetry, ***Burying October*** was introduced by fantasy writer Storm Constantine who said,

*"...his work touches more than one sense. After each poem is read, an echo lingers after, and an evanescent scent that presses upon our memories, makes us remember things we might have forgotten."*

Currently working on his 3<sup>rd</sup> collection of poetry, Jamie lives with an assortment of antiques, half read books and nearly empty absinthe bottles in a flat overlooking the Thames.

**For more Information on Jamie's work email:**

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