

Wander In The Woods

A Collection of Poetry by Ben Walsh

2024 – 2026

*This collection is dedicated to my wonderful
partner Janet, my dear brother Dylan
and my brilliant Mother and Father.
Their encouragement has helped me
to continue in these artistic pursuits.
Thank you.*

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~ Table of Contents ~

Mingle the Mouse, p.1-20

The Fall of Ghargrum, p.21-28

The Epilogue of Farmer Tom, p.29-30

The Whibilaub Nibbled on a Tree, p.31

The Whibilaub Worried a Horse, p.32

The Passage of Long Hours, p.33-34

The Tree of Many Winters, p.35

The Moon Came Down, p.36

Treatise on Tea Leaves, p.37-39

Sniffle the Hedgehog, p.40

The White Hare Inn, p.41

The Whobirbaub, p.42-43

The Whibilaub, p.44-46

Cheap Illusions, p.47-48

Scarlet Clouds, p.49-50

Wished Away, p.51

Skyward Cup, p.52

~ Table of Contents ~

A Boat Awaits Thee, p.53

The Green Man, p.54-55

Blue Balloon, p.56

Photograph, p.57

Wonderful, p.58

Presence, p.59-60

One Year, p.61-62

Sweetness, p.63-64

The Tree, p.65

Renewal, p.66

Anchor, p.67

Charlie, p.68-69

Time, p.70

Duck, p.70

Heat, p.71

Itch, p.72

Lily, p.73

Mingle The Mouse

In the Old Briar Wood
Where green things grew
There lay a small burrow
The size of a shoe

Inside of the burrow
Lived five little mice
Their home was quite cosy
Though lacking in light

The Mother and Father
Were wed by the sea
And striving together
Had parented three

Mingle and Thimble
And Poppy were they
"The sweetest of mice"
Their parents would say

Mingle, the oldest,
Often stared wistfully
Perched at the door
While his siblings
played blissfully

He was their elder
By only one day
Yet thought himself
Quite a bit wiser than they

His Mother and Father
Did worry at times
Never quite knowing
The thoughts on his mind

One day when their parents
Had gone to find food
A bird fluttered by
Bearing wonderful news

"A feast has been thrown
In the city of men
I share this glad tiding
So all may attend

The city is truly
A sight to behold
With white-washed walls
And gates of gold

The folk are all wholesome
And smell like sweet roses
They ready fine flavours
And scents for our noses"

Mingle the mouse
Was cheerful indeed
For tired he was
Of sunflower seed

He pondered no longer
Than a moment at most
Rising in haste
And forgetting his coat

His brother and sister
Were eager to follow
But Mingle was sure
They'd receive only sorrow

"That wonderful city
Both sparkles and shines
I doubt they let everyone
Enter to dine

I mean no offence
And that I must stress
Your manners are poor
And your fur is a mess

Lift up your spirits
Do not be so blue
For soon I'll be home
With a mountain of food!"

His kin did protest
But at last did agree
For they too were tired
Of sunflower seed

So Mingle departed
From home and his folk
Leaping o'er brambles
And heading t'ward smoke

With glee in each step
He bounded along
Passing through woodland
Throat full of song

Mingle gave no thought to it
But sang he did too loud
Such a tiny mouse as he
Should never draw a crowd

In a bush beside the road
There lay a cat a-slumb'ring
And when it heard the mouse approach
It growled as clouds a-thundering

The cat leapt out from where it slept
Toward the startled mouse
Its maw snapped shut near Mingle's head
Who bounded off with frightened shout

The tabby cat did give him chase
But could not beat young Mingle's pace
The weary cat did turn away
And Mingle spoke from hiding place

"Perhaps tomorrow, not today
For I must go along my way
A feast like this is rare indeed
And I'll be sure to have my feed"

Mingle shook a bit, it's true
Though he enjoyed the thrill of it
He knew his siblings would be keen
To hear a tale so perilous

Off the mouse did set again
Along his merry way
Relishing the thought of treasure
He would find that day

There were breads and jams
Butters and creams
Apples and oranges
Puddings and beans

Such fine food
Was there to be tasted
He had to attend
It could not be wasted

Over a moss-covered log
Under branches
And finally over a hill
Mingle panted

The town was in sight
Good scents on the breeze
He dreamed of delights
More pleasing than cheese

Through gleaming gates
He went with haste
And hungry look
Upon his face

Singing and laughter
Rang out in the sky
The gathering seeming
More sweet than a pie

Mingle was enchanted by the light
Which leapt from latticed glass
And how the stones upon the street
Did sparkle as he passed

He found the lumb'ring people
Rather harmless in their manner
Yet still he kept some distance
Giant feet like falling hammers

He passed a girl in bright blue dress
Clutching a chunk of buttered bread
He asked her where one could be fed
She smiled and shouted
"Straight ahead!"

He gave her thanks
And carried on
And heard behind him
Cheerful song

Where she had pointed
There he went
And found a towering
Linen tent

He slid underneath
And leapt on a chair
The feast now in reach
He gazed on the fare

A sea of tables lay before him
Arrayed with countless pleasing things
He knew not where to place his gaze
Apples or crackers, cheese or figs

At the tables sat a host
Of laughing merry-makers
Some were telling epic tales
Others lost in flavour

To Mingle's right there sat a man
Who chuckled, seeming drunk
His beard dipped in his tankard
As he cried "Greetings, little skunk!"

Mingle thought it funny
How the man was so mistaken
He lifted up his little hand
So that it could be shaken

Then came a cook
Three dishes in hand
And spotting young Mingle
She halted his plan

"I do not intend
To seem callous and mean
But ye may not partake
If arriving unclean"

Mingle thought nay
There must be confusion
He was one spotless
Was it delusion?

Swallowing pride
He made his inspection
And found that some dirt
Had evaded detection

Mingle was worrisome
Fearing rejection
So he pled for some soap
To make a correction

The cook did oblige
And soap issued forth
He scrubbed every side
East, West, South, North

And so he was clean
As a new cooking pot
The cook took a look
And gave him a nod

Mingle did sparkle
As crystal in light
And so did he dine
'Til falling of night

There were fruit pies, red wines
Peaches and plums
Apples and apricots
Crumbles and buns

He cheered and he sang
And heard many tales
Of monsters and men
'Til sleep's call prevailed

And so, feeling wearisome,
Sought out a bed
Lumb'ring along
Feet weighing like lead

His eyes fell at last
On a crack in a wall
He laid down some grass
And curled up in a ball

Passed he did through Slumber's door
Drifting on a pitch-black sea
Whisked away by silken sail
Driven by a frigid breeze

Mingle landed on a shore
More empty than a barren bone
No lonelier land had been before
And on the sand, a tow'ring throne

He thought perhaps he'd sit thereon
To look upon the spotless shore
But felt at once his peace had gone
So scurried off and saw no more

Beyond the beach there lay a gloom
Which bade him fall in deeper sleep
The only lamp to him the moon
And so he stumbled t'ward its gleam

Plodded he through soft and coarse
Knowing not what held his foot
'Til at last, the shadow passed
As though his eyes were rid of soot

There he saw them, 'round about
Kindred all with smiling snout
Skipping 'round a banquet fine
Chewing figs and sipping wine

Though he felt a hunger slight
His own kin were sweeter sight
Bounded he to meet them there
Yet gave they naught but wond'ring stare

"This one has no part with us
Why does he run to meet us so?
Indeed we called him brother once
But now he lacks our blinding glow"

Mingle did recoil in shock
Wincing at their wint'ry words
Feeling as a drop of rain
Swallowed up by careless earth

His pride at last conceded
And he bore a burning shame
For his kindred had he treated
In that self-preferring way

Returned he did to barren shore
Fleeing faces formed in dream
Fearing apathetic eyes
Would be the last he'd ever see

Mingle called to Slumber
Pleading loud for his release
The only sound beside his call
Were waves upon the beach

Strained he did to pierce the gloom
For a pardon swiftly sent
From the dark a boat did loom
As though it heard the mouse repent

A mighty gale did bear him up
Seating Mingle at the helm
Sails did swell with sweeping gust
And bore him hast'ly from the realm

Darkness fled at morn's approach
Mingle's eye caught glimpse of day
Rose he did from grassy cot
And walked toward the city gate

No mind had he for eating
All the crumbs which lay about
His stomach felt quite sickly
So he chose to go without

A morsel seemed as poison
Through the lens of Mingle's shame
He feared that all his kinsfolk
Would now curse his very name

Why, o why, would they rejoice
To see him home again
After his uncaring voice
Tore holes no mouse could mend

As Mingle trudged through quiet streets
And passed the remnants of the feast
He recalled his promise to his kin
That his return would bear a treat

So Mingle took a scrap of cloth
And filled it up with plenty crumbs
Tied it tightly at the top
And on his back, the sack he slung

He passed the gate, and on toward
The grassy fields did go
To the crumbs he tightly clung
As though they were his only hope

Disheartened, Mingle clambered
Over pebbles through the dewy grass
Too gloomy now to keep his tail
From dragging as he passed

His whiskered snout did twitch a bit
When thinking back on yesterday
From his eye, a tear did spring
Which was not wiped away

Just as Mingle thought perhaps
He ought to change his name
And travel to another land
To flee his yolk of shame

He wandered rather thoughtless
Through a tabby cat's domain
'Twas the one from whom he'd fled
Indeed, the very same

The wily cat watched Mingle pass
While sat inside a hollow tree
But appetite did vanish
As he witnessed Mingle drag his feet

"It is not within my nature
To have mercy on a mouse
Yet my will to hunt has left
Upon the sight of sniffing snout"

The mouse was startled from his stupor
Greeted by great, piercing eyes
With fear his feet were firmly rooted
So to the beast he did reply

"Poor Brother mouse and Sister mouse
To them I've spoken ill
And Mother mouse and Father mouse
I've left against their will

For they'd not have me roam about
And this I know quite well
And so, desiring finer things
I left, and did not tell"

The cat did seem quite solemn then
As one recalls a bitter dream
After a while, he gave a sigh
And to the mouse did speak

"When I was but a little cat
Filled with joys of youth
I ne'er remembered places well
Sadly 'tis the truth

One summer night, when moon flew high
My siblings rose with tired eyes
To follow Mother where'er she went
Until the night in full was spent

Yet I was playing with my tail
And did not see my kin depart
Until at last their absence dawned
Upon me in my lonely heart

So I went to search them out
While still the moon was overhead
Proven was that fearful doubt
And under bush I made my bed

If e'er I was to see my folk
I'd run to them with haste
So I pray thee, little mouse
Let not your time be waste"

Mingle bowed and gave his thanks
'Twas truth the cat did speak
His gesture did amuse the cat
Who smiled with shining teeth

And so the mouse did go his way
The cat did go another
And Mingle sighed in great relief
For he had not been supper

He hoped his siblings would not turn
To him a deafened ear
For he had much he wished to tell
Both wonderful and weird

Mingle passed through meadows green
Along his homeward path
Like the wind, he walked unseen
Beneath the wispy grass

He came at last to woodland's edge
Still he stood a while
And watched the sun as down it went
He could not help but smile

If the hills could yet accept
The sun, though it had flown so high
Surely Mingle's kindred could
Forgive his lofty pride

Through the trees wee Mingle tread
And found again the little door
Which hung upon their burrow
In the ancient forest floor

He gave a knock upon the wood
Upright ear observing
And for a moment silence lay
Which Mingle found unnerving

Then a herd of footsteps came
Hast'ly from the earth
Bounding up the burrowed stairs
As if to show his worth

One moment, Mingle felt relief
But soon recalled his fearful figment
An urge to flee beset his feet
Yet seized was every ligament

Poppy and Thimble could be heard
Gladly singing Mingle's name
They knew the knock was his alone
And wished to have him play their games

Inward swung the aged portal
Creaking on its birchen frame
There emerged a mirthful hoot
From shadow, silver whiskers came

Thimble and Poppy sprang about
Clinging not to careless words
Mother Mouse did weep aloud
Wiping teary eye with fur

They paid no mind to Mingle's gift
Embracing him instead
They cared much more for his return
Then sacks of floury bread

Mingle spoke through cheerful sound
To share his honest penitence
And had no trouble giving ground
Where once he would be hesitant

Father Mouse was pleased indeed
To hear him speaking plain
And so replied quite tenderly
To ease the yolk of shame

"Worry not young Mingle
We can see you're quite sincere
You're back at home with family
So there's no more need to fear

You can tell us all about it
Over supper in a while
And shed some light on worried minds
Which missed their wand'ring child"

Poppy put the kettle on
Thimble filled some bowls with seed
Mother got the teacups out
And Father even sliced some cheese!

And on the table Mingle placed
That sack of crumbs he'd gathered up
He hungered not to look at it
For he'd had quite enough

But of the food his kin laid down
Mingle gladly ate
And he recounted all he'd seen
Until the hour was late

Around the worn old table
Sat his kindred, listening keen
And from young Mingle's little snout
His smile did brightly gleam

When time for talk had ran its course
And all went off to bed
Through passageway to dim-lit room
He crawled to rest his head

And so thought Mingle evermore
The sweetest food is found at home
Amidst a host of happy mice
Whom he could call his own!

The Fall of Ghargrum

Ghargrum was a callous beast
Clad in iron were both his feet
By his belt a sword was borne
And in his mouth were countless teeth

Ghargrum was as tall as trees
Plates of steel concealed his knees
Fire swirled inside his eye
Causing hardy hearts to freeze

Ghargrum dwelt atop a hill
In his fortress cloaked in fog
The only voices Ghargrum heard
Were chirp of bird and croak of frog

Ghargrum wore a silver band
Around his fearsome head
Five red rubies lay
Upon that shining silver bed

Never did he meet a soul
To whom he did not boast
And of all he boasted of
His crown he spoke of most

The giant had an appetite
For praise more great than want of meat
And so he wandered far and wide
To frighten it from folk he'd meet

A fearful cry sufficed
As adoration in his hunger
Though why the people sought him not
Old Ghargrum often wondered

Those who froze in silence
Met their end through Ghargrum's violence
He could not bear a quiet stare
For it stirred offence inside him

Yet doomed he was to stumble
In the depths of Robber's Wood
His lofty pride there tumbled
As a man in briars would

One night by light of crescent moon
As Ghargrum in his chamber lay
He thought himself the kingliest
Of giants in his day

The giant rose upon a whim
Which bid him tread old Robber's Road
To march toward old Alderdien
Where by force a throne might be bestowed

And so the lumb'ring giant went
Off along his wicked way
From his fort, through Robber's Wood
Desiring all to praise his name

A hunter man was resting there
Stirring stew and roasting hare
When he heard a dreadful sound
'Twas giant feet upon the ground

Trees were shaken, branches broke
And all the sleeping creatures woke
Then the hunter caught a glimpse
Of shining silver through the smoke

That treacherous flame!
'Twas too late to smother
Or lay on his belly
And crawl for some cover

A fell old face in veil of shade
Appeared by light of flickering flame
Great and grey was Ghargrum's face
Glaring down on trembling prey

The hunter was as still as stone
Wishing for his hearth and home
Ghargrum spoke with mighty sound
And bid him look upon his crown

"I am Ghargrum, son of Mauthaub
Names which every creature's heard of
I take all things which I desire
Chilling hearts with eyes of fire

My crown does glow like winter snow
And with each day does fairer grow
Her ruby dress does clearly show
No greater crown has e'er been known

My teeth are fierce and armour strong
My name is heard in tale and song
Behold, a king shall hither stand
Whose reign shall last for ages long"

Hiprin was the hunter's name
Struggled he at times to speak
Though he trembled, yet he spoke
Much to his disbelief

"I say now, I see now
How mighty is he!
The giant called Ghargrum
Too great for a stead!

His legs are like tree trunks
His armour like stone
Ruling the realm
Through his strength alone

If it would please thee,
O Ghargrum King
I'd see thy great crown
For the joy that it brings

It is too lofty
Cloaked all in night
So the sign of thy power
Lies hidden from sight

Here, O King
Is my single request
Would thou lift me up high
T'ward the crown on thy head?"

Upon hearing these words
Old Ghargrum was pleased
Instead of much wailing
'Twas praise he received!

"How wise thou art
To give such respect
Now surely I'll grant thee
Thy reverent request"

And so, as the fire continued to roar
He stretched out his palm like an oak-wood floor
Knelt he did then on one giant knee
And lowered his hand t'ward Hiprin's feet

A side of Hiprin did regret
While he sighed and took a step
He feared like fish in fisher's net
As up toward the maw he went

He fought the urge to hold his nose
While trembling he rose
Against his sense, an odour foul
Of bitter breath did flow

Once Hiprin stood level with Ghargrum's fell grin
His courage awoke like a bear being poked
And up swung his boot in a flash past the chin

The man sent his foot, as quick as he could
Into the middle of Ghargrum's eye
That tow'ring foe received the blow
And let out an awful cry

The giant had worn a mighty proud look
When gifted with decadent praise
But quickly his eye sealed firmly shut
And fury washed over his face

Before his foe could fling him far
Hiprin sprang toward a tree
Though in the dark his head struck bark
And fell he did through branch and leaf

When Hiprin woke, the light had come
 'Twas midday at his waking
In amber leaves the hunter lay
 His head was sorely aching

He feared at first to walk about
 Knowing not the giant's fate
Until he saw the vacant eyes
Of Ghargrum in his ashen face

The proud and haughty Ghargrum
 Had been blinded by a boot
And stumbled down and cracked his crown
 For he caught his foot upon a root

O! How foolish was the giant
Who had wrought his own undoing
And made himself a monument
 For all the people's viewing

Ghargrum had no children
 And so his line did end
And none did mourn the villain
Who stumbled and bumped his head

Folk from every far-off place
Wore joyful looks upon their face
When they heard of Hiprin's courage
 And of Ghargrum's fate

In time, the giant's looming frame
Adorned a cloak of pleasing green
About the hill, pale flowers sprang
And at its top, there grew a tree

The Epilogue of Farmer Tom

When Farmer Tom had weary grown
His spirit sought its way t'ward home
Long he walked by bubbling stream
Lost in thought and hazy dream

Honest work he did by day
Tilling fields and baling hay
Under sun he'd ne'er dismay
Though oft' his toil was much

The sheep which dwelt in fields of green
Were glad when Farmer Tom was seen
For Tom had always joyful song
With pleasing rhyme and playful theme

Soaring sparrow, leaping trout
Songs of life were in his mouth
Hands were strong and belly stout
The harvest e'er was good

As sun came down on final day
Farmer Tom had naught to say
Those he loved had passed away
And long he felt their pull

The emerald hills and ruby sky
Seemed paler then through jaded eye
And to his home he said goodbye
Lingering at his door

Long ascending pearly stairs
Casting down his earthly cares
Just as creatures in their pairs
Found refuge from the rain

Never had old Tom sought after
Any form of fame
Yet all the creatures fondly
did recall the farmer's name

The Whibilaub Nibbled on a Tree

The Whibilaub gnawed on the trunk of a tree
If only somebody had been there to see
To stop the shenanigans right at their source
To stop the tree falling with such a great force

But alas it came down
With a creak and a crack
And a wallop and thud
And a whoosh and a whack

The tree broke beams
And toppled stones
And ruined the roof
Of an old man's home

His neighbours assembled
To mend what was broken
Theories of what had occurred
There were spoken

The old man was patient
Or at least tried to be
While rainwater poured in
And cooled down his tea

The Whibilaub Worried a Horse

The Whibilaub scurried
In front of a mare
The mare drew a carriage
Toward the town square

When the mare saw the creature
It reared up and fled
The carriage tipped over
Its wheels overhead

A lord and a lady
The carriages occupants
Crawled from the ditch
With no air of opulence

The Passage of Long Hours

I pen this poem
while sitting alone
Preferring some rhyming
to pining for home

That place I shan't be
for hours more still
As wages, it seems
are required for bills

My purpose in writing this
failed by line five
And so, thoughts of home
Are beginning to thrive

My bed, ever-patient
waits to receive me
In its embrace
I would drift away sleepily

Yet I remain here
And home remains there
I'll think with this ink
so my thoughts are not snared

As writing one's thoughts
is much more endurable
Than staring at walls
with one's thoughts on a turntable

Onward small seconds sail
Bearing me home
This poem is a gale
by which my boat's blown

The Tree of Many Winters

A leaf lay meekly on the ground
From it came no sound
Its green was fading, turning brown
Crumbling into powder

Yet the tree from which it came
Was still with all its power
And as the wind went on its way
It sweetly sang for hours

Still more leaves came swirling down
And so the earth was full
Yet the tree had sap inside
Though outward it was dull

It held the soil with sturdy roots
Trunk like mighty tower
And in the spring, the sleeping thing
Arose in veil of flower

The Moon Came Down

The moon came down one clear spring night
Gentle in her whispering
Sharing dreams in beams of light
While beasts and men were slumbering

She spoke of owls all singing soft
Beneath her silver glow
And all the host of sparkling stars
That danced o'er sleeping homes

She spoke of old oaks rustling
In a cool, caressing breeze
And how the wind would whistle
As it tip-toed through the leaves

She spoke then of the nightingale
Soaring through her moonlight pale
Rising, falling, twirling 'round
Far above the moonlit ground

She spoke of all her eyes had seen
And then she spoke no more
And as the sun arose from sleep
The moon began to snore

Treatise on Tea Leaves

There is nothing quite as pleasant
as a cosy cup of tea

You can drink it on a boat
while you travel overseas

You can drink it in the forest
while you're chatting to the bees

You can drink it while you sit
beneath a weeping willow tree

You can drink it while you eat a bowl
of pot-boiled peppered peas

You can drink it while you balance
cups and saucers on your knees

You can drink it in Antarctica
while trying not to freeze

You can drink it as you chew upon
some pungent yellow cheese

You can drink it while you're resting
after falling from a sneeze

You can drink it while you try to set
a captive creature free

You can drink it while you read a poem
about a cup of tea

You can drink it while you're gardening
and getting rid of weeds

with a soft straw sun hat
in a cool and calming breeze

You can drink it rather often
because tea is fairly cheap

Maybe you could drink a cup
to remedy disease

You can drink it while you drink a cup
of fresh, relaxing tea

You can drink it in whatever place
and whenever you please

No earthly force can stop you
Neither army nor police

The future is an oaken door
Tea, the copper key

The revolution starts today
So grab your flag and march with me

Tea will be a human right
And new school of philosophy

No other beverage will suffice
Or lead to such tranquillity

Now if you will excuse me
I will drink a cup of tea
while I climb a snowy mountain
with my favourite pair of skis

As it is indeed a certain truth
that there is no activity
which cannot be much improved
by drinking several cups of tea

Sniffle the Hedgehog

Sniffle was a hedgehog
Who lived under a tree
He thought himself a clever clogs
For he could count to three

But when he tried to count beyond
He got a bit confused
For he found it rather tricky
To conceive a pair of twos

The White Hare Inn

If e'er a weary sailor
Needs a place to rest their head
They look upon the White Hare Inn
Where weathered souls are fed

The hearth is always crackling
They're never short of stew
'Tis right atop a battered rock
Above the ocean blue

Ages long the inn there stood
Built from beams of ancient wood
Storms did roar as best they could
But yet the Hare remains

If e'er your feet are aching
And the sea ne'er seems to end
Leave your cares and rest ye there
Amidst a host of friends

The Whobirbaub

If ye cross the Crooked Isle
And feel a sudden shake
Take it as a certain sign
The Whobirbaub shall wake

Stir up not the Whobirbaub
Down in its gloomy den
For many men have ventured there
But none came up again

Scoff not at the Whobirbaub
They say such jest is heard
The rocks recall each utterance
Reporting every word

Scornful men who step inside
The entrance of its lair
Speak a tongue of gibberish
With looks of pure despair

When kings of old grew greedy
And sought out riches great
E'er their hearts did pine for more
And thus each sealed his fate

Among them was King Thilian
Enthroned in Edruin
He was told that loathsome foe
Was hiding gold from him

He mustered up all able men
Each was clad in shining chain
Set they forth across the sea
Through biting wind and beating rain

They came upon that fearful lair
And brandishing their blades
Marched below the light of day
Bearing lamps to show the way

Naught came up again but smoke
And distant, woeful cries
Then Thilian fled his company
And sick with shame, he died

Forget ye not this grim account
As years pass by with haste
For greater pain than this may come
When tales are put to waste

Stir up not the Whobirbaub
Down in its gloomy den
For many men have ventured there
But none came up again

The Whibilaub

The Whibilaub dwelt in the Wiling Woods
Which lay to the west of Hadirfell
It made no noise, no creak or thud
And of its likeness, none could tell

The Whibilaub was quite a mischievous thing
Sniffing 'round where it ought not to have been
It squeezed under doors and chewed through the floors
And always it found its way in

It snuck into pantries and larders at night
Giving fat cats quite a terrible fright
It gobbled up cured meats, cheese wheels and all
Sleeping then soundly inside of the wall

The Whibilaub frequently pilfered fruit crumbles
While they were cooling in windows ajar
It clambered and clawed all the way up the wall
And swiftly it bore the poor crumble afar

Oh what a nuisance, cunning and quick
Oh what a scallywag, playing its tricks
Gobbling up greedily, licking its lips
And pilfering silverware out of the sink

The Whibilaub oft' raided drawers full of socks
Gathering wool for its nest
Many a baby and lady and man
Had feet which fell victim to theft

It rummaged through kitchens for silverware fine
To stick in the ground 'round its lair in a line
The Whibilaub thought 'twas a mighty defence
To build such a dazzling and blinding bright fence

One day when the people together agreed
That they had grown weary of all the misdeeds
They came to the lord in Hadirfell's hall
With a call they hoped he would heed

But the lord was too busy
Or so he did say
In earnest he lounged
In his bed every day

To set them at ease, he said it would stray
That it would soon tire and wander away
But alas, the wee creature persisted with vigour
And each time it feasted, it grew slightly bigger

At last it did visit the lord in his hall
Nobody heeded, though loudly he called
The Whibilaub ate every morsel of food
Then chewed through a floorboard
And vanished from view

The lord was in shock
And hid under sheet
But soon his wool socks
Were pulled right off his feet!

From where, oh where, did the Whibilaub come?
No one is certain, but rumours abound
Some say it simply came up from the ground
Instantly set upon troubling their town

Whatever the case is
This much is known
It's harder to deal with a beast
When it's grown

Cheap Illusions

The perfect worker hath appeared
Who ne'er sweats or tarries
But the lack is painful clear
When steel and soul are married

This is what he fails to see
Knowing not the joy of life
Booing down the towering tree,
Chicken's egg & pregnant wife

Behold, he says, my wizardry
Regard the speed at which I go
Ruin the gates which keep us far
From praise the painters place in troves

I wish not for the sight of it
This mangled mess we've made of art
Spitting in the way of every honest soul
Who's taken part

He fumes at those who work for skill
'Ye were born with skill', he scoffs
Let us now democratize
And lay aside all haughty thought

'We shall soon replace you all'
He whispers in the painter's ear
Halt your wasteful weeping
For the future has appeared

But after all there yet shall be
A dreamer by a babbling brook
Caught in nature's revelry
Taking flight in sketching book

Scarlet Clouds

When kings begin to quarrel
And fury does abound
Ye can be sure to hear the purr
Of baneful beasts in town

When scarlet clouds hang overhead
And darken doorways black
They shan't be long appearing
Like drips appear through cracks

A host of hearts burn hotly
Rulers rise to speak
Many minds are swayed to fight
And revel in their feats

No matter what the causes are
The ends are all the same
A mountain made of bodies
The living lost in pain

As kings address their people
Look and you shall see
Perched upon their shoulders
The creatures jump with glee

Their teeth are long for biting
 Their tails do bind and choke
They long for naught but fighting
 Their words are dark as smoke

 Be ye of the soundest mind
 Leave no thought astray
For peril prowls 'round every wall
 Seeking feeble prey

 No matter what the causes are
 The ends are all the same
A mountain made of bodies
 The living lost in pain

Wished Away

When the winter leaves me weary
And I search for signs of life
My heart will pine for springtime

And when the spring is at its height
My heart will long for summer
And its joyous golden light

And when the summer months arrive
My heart will look to late July
For summertime to take its bow
And to the autumn pass its crown

And surely then I'll relish
all the colours of the trees
But soon enough my soul will sing
of snow upon the eaves

It seems a rather morbid thing
to wish my time away
Fixed upon the distance
as this day, uncherished, fades

Skyward Cup

I raise my chalice
T'ward the heavens
Trembling and unsure
Deep within my soul
I know the rain is ever pure

Whether sweet or bitter
The sup will still descend
Mending tears with its repairs
I fail to comprehend

These eyes can see a sliver
of the river as it winds
Oft' confusing views
to be an image unconfined

So I swirl about inside
that row-boat of the mind
Loosing grip on oars to lift
my chalice t'ward the skies

A Boat Awaits Thee

O chainéd one
Pray lend an ear
There waits a boat
In waters near

I know thy name
And see thy flame
Doth dwindle while
Thou ling'rest here

Cloaked in wrack
She hides from sight
In tide of black
And veil of night

The guard is slack
With turned back
Now quickly
Take thy flight

The Green Man

In ages that have passed away
There dwelt a man of green
In Edruin, that northern land
Beyond the raging sea

E'er the birds would sing to him
And always he'd reply
With songs as sweet as honey
To array the yawning sky

Seldom did he ponder long
On where his feet would rest
Rather, thoughts of growing things
Took root within his head

Through the feathered hills he went
Leaping like a child
And in his wake, while strength was spent
There blossomed flowers wild

His locks were soft as beds of moss
Ivy-green they grew
And perched within his tresses
There were flowers of every hue

He wore a cloak of cotton
It was dyed a regal blue
Bare were both his feet
Upon the early morning dew

Friend he was to bird and beast
And had for each a name
He did not see the weak as least
But felt their every pain

He knew the splendid tales of olde
And lore he stored in trove
Alas, at last, he left the world
With wealth more great than gold

Blue Balloon

Floating over hill and valley
Birds-eye view of oak and sally
Naught to do but dilly-dally
Sleepy and content

No fear is in the blue balloon
Whistling an uplifting tune
Ever dancing with the moon
And wandering with the wind

Photograph

To Janet

The last of all the film she had
Spent upon that photograph

I pondered why she'd caught me so
Without some time to smile for show

Truth there is to be beheld
In faces which forget themselves

Sweet was she for choosing me
In place of all else one can see

Wispy clouds & willow trees
Humming birds & honey bees

Countless as the stars above
Truly, such is love

Wonderful

O LORD, Your love is wonderful
And vast beyond compare
Though feet are prone to stumbling
You lift us up with care

Your Holiness is humbling
So bright we cannot see
More luminous than lightning
As it flashes o'er the sea

All our threads of suffering
Are woven through your plan
And though we scarce can see the path
You guide us with your hand

Ages long the grave was shut
But You have rent its gates
Indeed You gave Your life for us
Through endless depths of grace

Presence

To Janet

I wish to be with you
Yet do I vanish
Taken by cares
That bestow no advantage

You search my expression
Expecting a smile
It's present, but buried
By thoughts in a pile

Porous and open
Noise enters in
Polluting this garden
We've tended within

Of't I forget
How blessed I have been
Knowing you, Dear
Is a wonderful thing

Where love is in speech
I stumble on words
Often I struggle
For thoughts to be heard

Yet will I wait
My love for you growing
Sitting with you
In the shade of unknowing

The day shall soon come
And night then shall run
Feeding hope
Like a leaf-laden dove

While eyes are yet dark
I'll sing like a lark
So my face again speaks
Of our love

One Year

To Janet

My Dear, this year
Has made its way
To memory's embrace
Time soars by
Whilst by your side
At such a pleasant pace

You are to me a sparkling stream
Meandering through barren land
A lamp within a shadowed room
A soothing wave o'er desert sand

In waking dream I see a day
When you and I together dwell
No more for each a different way
With bittersweet farewells

There is a voice in both our ears
At times so deafening loud
It tells us we should disappear
Or find some other route

But you and I, we know the truth
That is not how our story ends
And when one falls, the other calls
With words to spur us on again

I know we both are better folk
Than who we were last year
Oh what a joy it's been to grow
With one so sweet, my Dear!

If I could not hold your hand again
The world would seem so blue
For every moment turns to gold
When it is spent with you!

Sweetness

To Janet

In a world quite often bitter
Your sweetness helps me run the race
What a joy it is to see
A smile upon your pretty face

Your heart is oft' so full of cheer
I cannot help but feel the same
Your words are full of love and comfort
Like balloons to ease the weight

Your beauty surely grows with time
As heart and soul unfurl
You are to me the choicest jewel
Finer than the rarest pearl

In music, art and poetry
There's joy in all we share
I am grateful beyond measure
To know you truly care

I often think that had I been
Another place that joyful day
When I was told the fellowship
I longed for was not far away

Our paths would not have likely crossed
And I would not have known such gain
Though I suppose, God in His love
Would have us meet another way

I recall the day God told me
He would lift my bones to life
Of all the ways He blessed me
Your friendship is the best delight

For years a wall stood 'round me
Nursing pain and lacking faith
But you became my neighbour
And brick by brick it fell away

God saw my famished heart
And piled a banquet on my plate
For He knows the heart of man
Desires solace in a mate

I do not need the world to love me
Nor do I desire wealth
I am content to sit with you
Thankful for our time and health

I speak my mind sincerely
In this poem I wrote for you
I'll let my face turn rosy
Giving thoughts for you to chew

The Tree

The tree stands tip-toed
Grasping at the sun
Basking in the rays of day
Until the night has come

It does not taste of sorrow
When its kin are lost in flame
But when the clouds begin to cry
Its roots will drink the rain

Renewal

Holy GOD, full of grace
Lift us from this bitter place
Lonesome bones here weary dwell
In this pitch-black pit they fell

Bones which once had lungs to praise
And magnify Thy Holy Name
Bones which once had eyes to see
The endless love which flows from Thee

They know no words for their dismay
Nor where the sun did hide away
But LORD, these bones are in Thy hand
And life itself at Thy command

I know that when Thy will decrees
Life will fill such bones as these
And weary hearts again shall see
That Thou art LORD of all

Anchor

Forever my anchor
In waves of sheer anger
The water ascending
Will snarl as it spins

The waves, though imagined
Are no lesser savages
Full of dark sayings
Recalling my sins

Yet do you hold me
Strong and unfaltering
With a sweet song
In the salt air a-buffeting

You raise me from peril
And place me on stone
My feet are secure
And my future is known

Look there! A lighthouse!
And yonder, the shore!
Darkness is breaking
And day issues forth

Charlie

Charlie was a chipper chap
A dapper dog was he
He had no tail, but did not fail
To wag his rear with glee

About his breed, we'd not agreed
Though if we saw his family tree
I do believe we'd likely see
A Labrador amidst the leaves

His coat was black, besides a patch
Of white upon his chest
One fateful day, his face turned grey
And long became his rest

In youth, he leapt through swathes of grass
Blades he chewed while racing past
He'd sprint for a stick whene'er 'twas thrown
Though he'd not return it, but chew it alone

When rain did dampen Raya's hair
Charlie groomed her coat with care
When Raya had reason to visit the vet
He'd worry and whine, confused and upset

When greeting, he'd stick his snout
Right in one's face
Old Charlie could not fathom
Personal space

Though it was near empty
His head was quite heavy
And gladly he rested
Wherever he could

Sometimes he would nap
With his head on a lap
Or lay his old chin
On a chair

A small wooden box
Now sits on the cabinet
Nameplate to tell
Of the ashes inside it

Beside it another
Like sister and brother
Mem'ry too heavy
To carry it

You will not hear
Yet will I say
Your numerous years
Have all brightened our days

Duck

Consider now the duck
Silly, shy and plump
Waddling 'round
Bill to ground
Searching out a slug

It cannot help with study
It does not know the time
But it may leave a tasty gift
Which you may poach or fry

Time

Out of respect for your limited time
This little poem is a mere two lines

Heat

The unrelenting sun
Set fire to a stone
Sizzling into vapour
It let no trace be known

A bush became a cloud of smoke
Flame came up from shrivelled grass
Through the heat a wanderer came
Seeking shade while scorching passed

Rest was found inside a cave
And deep within, a sparkling pool
Once night had taken throne of day
The man emerged and went his way
And every breath was cool

Itch

I have an itch
Inside my head
That will not go away

‘Rise at once
And fetch a pen’
It will often say

I comply
With sleepful eyes
Wishing it would go

But I know
Were it to leave
I would be,
In a sense,
Alone

I write my thoughts
I sketch away
Until, at last,
The light of day

Creeps along the hillside
And quiet up the wall
Gently through the window
As eyelids start to fall

Lily

Here today and gone tomorrow
Fleeting beauty without sorrow
All content, it need not borrow
Bloom and shine again

Ask from where its beauty springs
Petals point t'ward higher things
Rain and sun provide its drink
Lifting hearts of men

The poems in this collection
are available online in audio form
on the following web pages:

www.youtube.com/@mosswurk_music
mosswurk.bandcamp.com
mosswurk.com/music

These poems are also available
in written form online
on the following web pages:

mosswurk.bandcamp.com
mosswurk.com/poetry

Thank you for taking the time to read
these poems. I hope you have enjoyed
them. I would highly recommend
poetry-writing as a hobby.
It is accessible and cathartic.

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