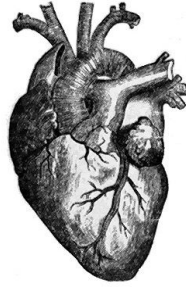


SEVENTY BEATS



SEVENTY BEATS
Poems

by
Philippa Crundwell



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For my family, the whole rowdy lot of you.

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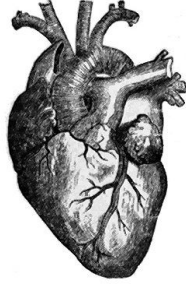
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For Our Eyes Only

These poems are for our eyes only;
Secrets between just you and me,
To reflect on when your heart is stony,
Or when your soul needs setting free,
If you read each word with thought and care,
And feel each beat from start to end,
Then I believe these words will take you somewhere,
You will feel the true message each nuance sends,
So please embrace them with devotion,
So you will connect with the narrative,
And imagine every depiction and notion,
That I, to you, took the time to give,
And remember these are secret words,
That may bring laughter, or reflection when lonely,
Or perhaps a new stance on events that occurred,
But remember - these are for our eyes only.



WORLD ISSUES

Peace One Day

When fragile words are spoken,
Then promises not kept,
Then someone may get broken,
And tears are often wept,
This is the massive void within,
The tender spot inside,
Where evil, hurtfulness and sin,
Have vandalised my pride,
So I set out to hurt you,
And cut you like a knife,
And after all you've been through,
I caused the deepest strife,
The gorge between us grew and grew,
So did those precious years,
Though neither of us ever knew,
We'd cried each other's tears,
I should have said I'm sorry,
So many years before,
Before we'd dug a quarry,
Between our bedroom doors,
I should have gently held your hand,
So many moons ago,
And tried to let you understand,
What I hope your heart might know,
I want to find a way to see,
Your side of the coin,
So I'll set my hate and anger free,
So that our hearts may join,
So can we cross the no-man's-land?
To iron out every crease,
So I can hold your tender hand,
And we can live in peace.

Defending Our Homeland

We are a forest of evergreen trees
In this war, this persecution
We are not felled by the breeze
We will stand side by side
At the border of our homeland
Where we'll take colossal pride
From defending the place we stand
For our roots are in the soil
That our ancestors have ploughed
And we won't let them destroy
This place and race of which we're proud
We'll sway our branches together
To the rhythm of the ancient earth
And take strength from the land
That gave our identity from birth
In this war, this persecution
They may attack us with their guns
But still we will stay standing
Even if some sap does run
And even if they fire our trunks
And we lay as ash and dirt
That's not the end; will never be
For we've left seeds in the earth
And we'll defend our homeland
And we surely will not die
Until there's no light from our sun
When the black clouds rule the sky.

When Society Takes Away Everything

Where is hope when society takes away everything?
But the skin on your bones
And your withered weary mind
Is there hope left in your heart?
When you are condemned
To a life sentence in a harsh, enclosed world
Where the ground is stubbornly hard with ice
In the skin-sizzling summer sun
When the wire fences wilt with heat
Is there hope left in your heart?
When you feel so afraid of that bullet
The one that is meant for you
Or of being tortured
Or worse
Hearing the screams of a loved one
In a cold, dark room
With small people
Revelling in the pain they cause
Is there hope left in your heart then?
Do you see the eagles flying?
Beyond the walls of guards
Beyond the metal fences
Above the pines on the mountain
And know somehow
That one day
You will reach that place again
Is there hope in your heart?
When you work the day through
Until your lungs can't take the dust
And you cough and cough
As if expelling
The hated thing inside you

And yet the eyes of those who keep you
Only brim with more hatred
And the mark of their stick on your skin
Agrees
Is there hope in your heart?
When more of those you know are brought in
To be resigned, confined, entwined
With the ways of 'life' that you must obey
There must be hope in your heart.
There is always
Always hope
Up until the moment you decide
(If you have the choice)
To end it all
There is a dying wail of hope
In the moment you pull the trigger
Or string the noose
There is a pious, pleading, pitiful hope
Even then
That there is a God
Or that there is not
There is hope for these things and more
You are brimming with hope at that moment
For something better
Beyond
Perhaps up in those snow-decorated mountains
That whisper with the clouds
And the sapphire sky
There is hope when society takes away everything
Otherwise there is nothing left
And you are not what you were
You are no longer human.

Merry War

Sword to sword in blood they'll brawl
To cross the enemy lines
Shattered with the pain they'll fall
For wars are merry times
Tooth for tooth, hand for hand
Gut for gut with bayonets
Sparring in the treacle land
Hopes of winning in straight sets
Deafened by the firing
Shaken stiff with strife
This harsh mental re-wiring
Stays with them all their life
In yellow poison they will drown
Singing songs of joy
To hide each tear and every frown
From their little boys
Muddied face and muddied heart
When it doesn't hurt to hurt another
See friends' corpses on a cart
Murder father, son and brother
They'll slash and crash and crumble
Have limbs blown off in mines
Get slaughtered if they stumble
For wars are merry times.

Subtle Reality

Sewn in amongst the fantasy
Is a strange subtle reality
Behind the guise of fairyland
A silent message underhand
Between the flakes of fairy dust
A spell of hate, or greed or lust
Is cast into this world of ours
Through fantasy's transcendent powers
Beneath each evil villain's cloak
A darker demon lurks in smoke
The talking clock that sings the time
Is there for reason not for rhyme
For pretext quite political
Or even darkly critical
May hide in every palace
Taint the wine in every chalice
For sewn in amongst the fantasy
Is a strange subtle reality
Beyond the make-believe's sweet looks
Is a truth that blends our world with books.

Hopeful but Alone

Said Abdul to Khaleid 'Merry Christmas Eve',
As he waited at the bus stop in the thickening mist,
How he had arrived here he couldn't conceive,
But he read the crumpled paper held tight in his fist.
The place to get a job was 'Lundon sity' he read,
As a tall man surveyed the unfamiliar child,
'Why are you here alone?' the Englishman said,
'I'm waiting for the bus... and Christmas.' He smiled.
'What do you want for Christmas?' asked the man: Mr. Cobb,
The boy whispered so quietly it could have been the wind,
'You want shelter, your family, as well as a job?'
Christmas brought Abdul hope so he nodded and grinned.
From the mist came the laugh of a jingling bell,
It was a laugh like Khaleid's before they bombed his home,
Soon the army had bombed Abdul's house as well,
So now Abdul was in England, hopeful but alone.
He looked up to see Mr. Cobb wasn't there,
Abdul started; he'd thought Cobb was catching the bus,
What did it matter? Why should he care?
He'd just vanished without a word or a fuss.
Then Abdul's forehead creased into a frown,
The man had seemed curious, yet pretentiously coy,
Khaleid had told him to keep his head down,
But he wasn't illegal, just an innocent boy.
A blue and neon car came from the misty night,
Purring towards him with purpose and speed,
Abdul wiped away the tears that impaired his sight,
'Merry Christmas from England' he whispered to Khaleid.

The Match of '89

The howling wind that never dies,
Soaring desperate screams and cries,
Of those who hurt and died alone,
Of those who didn't come back home,
'89 oh '89, the promises God broke that day
'89 oh '89, destroyed our hearts in every way,
They had to fight to breathe in pain,
The crowd of that now famous game,
It wasn't right; it wasn't sane,
For all it was: a match, a game,
'89 oh '89 an ugly blot on history's page,
'89 oh '89 the turmoil, the suffering, anger and rage,
The howling wind blows through the trees,
A gentle message rides the breeze,
Remember here two girls we lost,
The ticket with the dearest cost,
Remember now, their frightened eyes,
When you hear those roaring football cries,
And remember too, we vowed back then,
That history must not happen again.

Stop Thinking for the Holidays

Stop thinking about notoriety for the holidays
Find a peaceful place beside a silver stream
Settle in there amongst the heather and copious grass
Let yourself drift like the water's flow and dream
Stop thinking about criminality for the holidays
Lie down and watch the water stroke the stones
The dark back streets and tacky corner shops will wait
Whilst you sip the cool air and rest your bones
Stop thinking about disreputability for the holidays
Watch the clumsy lambs dancing on the hill
Shoot at the world with your camera this time
And listen to the blackbird's bold, handsome trill
Stop thinking about radicalism for the holidays
Freedom is everywhere, just look up to the sky
The world is beautiful by the stream in the hills
Watch the swallows soar and you'll understand why
Stop thinking about militancy for the holidays
Take off your sticky socks, cast them away
Paddle in the cold, silky, fresh flow of water
And you will feel the glory of a peaceful holiday.

Watch Your Step

A whispered rumour caught and bottled
can become a danger,
It can stretch, grow and turn slowly from question to answer
Forever capturing a moment in time
with the wrong people can be terrible,
It might twist, turn and be tinkered with –
so people forever see it at the wrong angle
A message being recorded however subtle
could choke the world,
If it's replayed louder and louder every time
until the true meaning is irrelevant
A discreet gentle word over a shoulder
may become a roar of anger blasted across
A city,
A country,
Then the world
Anyone can be evil if they are shaped
and moulded into the right position,
And the mould blown up a thousand times
until it's the only thing you can see
An imprint on your retina
Feed a person a story, no matter how terrible,
They'll swallow it if it's shoved in their face
You have to watch your step being a celebrity;
Journalists have huge noses pearly with sweat,
lusting for a story
And even larger feet that have grown
way beyond their personal sphere
They set traps and tricks and lay ears in your path -
They'll trip you up eventually.

Elephant Song

At the watering hole there are musical cries,
Great fountains of water are sprayed at the skies,
Strong, charcoal bodies with dark wrinkled features,
These, surely, are Kenya's most beautiful creatures,
But a saddening blue are the notes that they sing,
For they know that their future's a vulnerable thing,
These creatures await a terrible fate,
As they bellow and bath and compete for a mate,
As you stalk them and watch them all mighty and wild,
Do you see them as money, not father and child?
Do you aim for his brains when you shoot through his hide?
Does your small heart not ache for the calf at his side?
And when the brave creature cascades to his knees,
Do you know that your face is the last thing he sees?
Once you've run with your gun to the place where he fell,
Is that all you can think of - the goods that you'll sell,
Do you not hear his last trumpeting cry?
As the humble beast closes his dark eyes to die,
He's a grandiose giant you've known from the start,
So are his tusks truly worth more than his heart?
Yes, why do you poach when you know it's so wrong?
Do you not hear the great elephant's song?

Taken

Vision of the amber rising sun,
As eighteen daggers tread the earth,
Body of grass; of night and fire,
An elegant creature from her birth.

A ruby plucked out of a glittering crown,
Tranquillised, kidnapped, thrown in the back,
Driven away from her habitual forest,
They stole her mind to make her world black.

Glazed over eyes of misted up glass,
Unaware of events; unaware she's alone,
Taken far, far away to an alien place,
Stolen from family; stolen from home.

Locked up, confined, nowhere to run,
Eyeing her inmates with large dark jewels,
Pacing, pacing, pacing the cage,
The on-looking capturers sniggered, the fools.

Babies sprawled sticky fingers all over the glass
Parents came, and saw, and left, then forgot,
Children skipped by with an ignorant glance,
They let her heart die and her spirit rot.

From a...
Vision of the amber rising sun,
As eighteen daggers tread the earth,
Body of grass; of night and fire,
An elegant creature from her birth.

To a...
Vision of freedom and the wilderness,
Trapped in one room, with nothing to do,
Body of weakness, lost hope and desire,
An elegant tiger imprisoned in a zoo.

Poisoned Island

Island oh island do tell me your tale,
Why are there no chocolate ice creams for sale?
Why is there no trace of sand by your sea?
Why is this no place for people to be?
Where are your hotels and villas with pools?
Where are your rivers and blue waterfalls?
Where is your music so lively and free?
Oh why is this no place for people to be?
Was it us that stole it, dear island, you say?
But how did *we* take all your beauty away?
How did we wipe the palm trees from your shore?
What did we do and what could it be for?
Cartwheeling packets from sugary sweets,
Old ice cream wrappers from summer sun treats,
Oil barrels stacked up in brown plastic mountains,
Sulphur dioxide and CO₂ fountains,
Rubbish and litter line the shores of your sea,
Flies fill the air where the people should be,
A carcass of life as it was here before,
Before the pollution surrounded your shore,
Before the beer cans ran silvery streams,
Before the seabirds died in oil drowned dreams,
Before poisons and toxins soaked your gold sand,
Before this became the Maldives rubbish land,
Yes, this is no place for people to be,
In a plastic bag desert by the chemical sea,
You are the island that tourists avoid,
Because this is the landscape that humans destroyed.

Fragile Earth

Who cares for the earth's fragility?
It's human's responsibility
But now it seems that nobody cares
For the birds, antelopes and grizzly bears
And we've scraped coloured coral off the sea floor
As over-fishing continues to soar
And our need to build houses, roads and train stations
Has led to some drastic deforestation
Yes, the deforestation (we've caused that as well)
How long left for the Amazon? No-one can tell
So the rivers of sewage are the least of our troubles
As they drain to the seas of yellow-brown bubbles
And those fresh water creatures that are found dead
Due to the toxins and poisons we've spread
And poaching rare creatures for their teeth, tusks or skin
Is still carried out (though considered a sin)
And though animal activists holler and shout
Siberian tigers are still dying out
And these terrible bombs that we want to release
Ruin the land and shatter the peace
And the litter that foams like a fierce tidal wave
Buries our streets in a sweet-wrapper grave
An army of automobiles, boats and trains
Cause torrents of fumes like roaring jet planes
So who cares for the earth's fragility?
It's human's responsibility
But I saw a picture online yesterday
Where a diver encounters a Great White in the bay

And it said in the text "This animal here,
Is the most dangerous creature ever, we fear"
And suddenly the message became quite clear,
As it said "He kills millions every year"
Every action that harms our world - we must ban it
So we can save our small, fragile planet.

Changing City

A hectic hub of humanity,
Joy, sadness, anger, strife,
A shaken lemonade can,
Just fizzing full of life,

But the busy city changes,
With the setting seaside sun,
When nightclubs start invading,
Enslaving city young,

A concentration of creation,
Where graffiti art is thick,
By night, a spreading web of words,
Engulfing every brick,

Booze and blaring music,
And careless screeching cries,
Between the breaths of cigarettes,
Fill troubled, smoky skies,

Shattered glass shop windows,
Fragmented works of art,
Glinting in the moonlight,
Piercing through my heart,

Stop the changing city,
Splitting at the seams,
In the cloak of darkness,
In alcoholic dreams,

Stop the changing city,
Turning now to sin,
Torn at from the outside,
But hurting from within.

One-Souled World

I've a hope and dream of time and place,
When we share one soul: the human race,
A place and time where duchess and beggar,
Are as equal as Saint Agur blue and plain cheddar,
When the rich and the posh folk don't pass the poor by,
Or strut with their nose in the air quite so high,
When they don't screw it up
like they've smelt something vile,
They instead drop a copper or a warm welcome smile,
When the callous remarks about class are not there,
Then I know we've arrived at a world that is fair,
And the cost of your skirt or your Au de Jai vest,
Are not the way that we judge who's the best,
Or the size of your house or your dog or your nails,
Are not the reasons one passes or fails,
Instead it's the love and the care that you show,
Not the places you've been or the people you know,
I've a hope and dream of time and place,
When we share one soul: the human race.

Beyond this Earth

If you believe what I believe
Another world you could conceive
Another life beyond this earth
Free from harness, chains and girth
Beyond our milky tear-streaked skies
Past our silent moon's grey eyes
Yonder our sun's flames and fire
A place whose beauty will inspire
If you believe what I believe
Another world you could conceive
A land with resource to sustain
A place with space to entertain
An earth without a room of faces
Dictating - segregating races
A land where not a single life
Need take another to survive
Or rip a life away with choice
Or harm another to rejoice
If you believe what I believe
Another world you could conceive
But could not reach for distance and time
Are the difference between reason and rhyme.

