

Poems
for
Paula

*a collection
of
poems*

by

Tom McGreevy

RB

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Poetry

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my wife Paula
whose love and kindness knows no limits

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Poems for Paula

THE DET

Alone in the corner,
The Irish music blaring.
Don't look up, don't look round,
The I.R.A. are staring.

Have they sussed me? Shall I leave?
A long way to the door.
Oh God! I feel them coming,
Slowly cross the floor.

With shaking hands, I raise my eyes,
They stare into my face.
"You spying English bastard!"
My heart begins to race

I think of torture, will I cope?
A black sack on my head.
Will I scream, as they begin?
I could be home in bed.

I asked for this detachment,
I shouldn't really moan.
At it now for six full month,
My mind it dreams of home.

They walk on past, so close to feel.
The wee runs down my leg.
The fear released inside me,
I down my final dreg

Poems for Paula

At the table right behind me,
Sits back-up Dave, my mate.
It wasn't me they wanted!
It's Dave, it's him, it's fate!

I want to leave, I want to run,
Escape here whilst I can.
How can I leave him all alone?
Desert another man?

My Browning's in my trousers,
Thirteen rounds in all.
How many could I "Take out" ?
Before my final fall?

"Save him now!" a voice screams out,
The voice inside my head.
Why risk myself as well?
When Dave's as good as dead.

I turn away, avert my eyes,
My luck is in this night.
I catch a glimpse of begging eyes,
He's got no chance to fight.

They march him past me, held so tight,
Dave's legs have gone to jelly.
They drag him out the back door,
A lane, so dark and smelly.

Poems for Paula

The crowd pours out, I'm sucked along,
In to the pouring rain.
Dave is down upon his knees,
His face so full of pain.

He looks at me, a silent prayer,
"You'd help me if you could "
The sack goes down upon his head,
I will! I can't! I should!

I stand there weeping silent tears,
So helpless do I feel.
Why die along beside you?
Don't ask me as you kneel!

The pistol rests against Dave's head
The gunman looks right at me
Does he know I'm one of them?
"I'm not! I'm Irish! See?"

I slide my hand inside my belt,
The metal of the gun feels cold.
But I know that I won't use it,
To die before I'm old!

The crowd all give "The Thumbs-down ",
The signal to shoot.
My thumb it goes down with them,
I'm staring at my boot.

Poems for Paula

The killer laughs right at me,
His finger on the trigger.
I'm sure he knows, I'm one of them,
He shoots! A silent snigger.

Graffiti grows upon the wall,
Mingled with the rain.
A closer look, not chalk, not paint,
Just bits of poor Dave's brain

I walk away down cobbled lane,
The killer shouts a warning!
"Don't come back upon our turf!
You'd die before the morning!"

They've let me go, tonight I live,
With the I.R.A., no messing.
To live with what I did to Dave,
"Go home and learn a lesson!"

I often think about that night,
And if I could've saved him.
Would Dave forgive me if he knew?
I've since risked life and limb

Was I a coward long ago?
Or was I only Human?
To save myself, at his demise,
I bet he's bloody fuming!

A time long ago, over the water

Poems for Paula

TUMBLEDOWN

The windswept graves of long lost friends,
Lie miles across the seas.
There but for the grace of God,
Why them? And why not me.

The battle on Mount Tumbledown,
a barren waste of land.
A tribute to my soldier friend,
My comrades final stand.

The sky was black, yet all ablaze,
With flares, and guns, and bombs.
My friend was by my side that night,
He's fallen, now he's gone.

I stop to search the sodden marsh,
The mud is everywhere.
I find him scattered in a hole,
His brains amongst his hair.

I held him in my arms that night,
With him when he cried.
"Kill me now" he whispered,
And then he died.

Poems for Paula

Now buried on a hillside,
Eight thousand mile away.
Apart from friends and family,
Forever he will stay.

I see him still, the way he was,
Before the rounds hit home.
A funny, healthy, cheerful lad,
No brains, no blood, no bone.

I see him in my dreams,
I see him in the mist.
I see him in The Naafi,
Legless, and half pissed

I seldom name my friend,
That died by me that night.
His name is not important,
He fought for peace and right.

Just another soldier,
Lost on Tumbledown that night.
So long ago, why should I care?
Why lie awake at night?

I shouldn't get these nightmares,
Of comrades, dead and dying.
I shouldn't wake up screaming,
And yes! I wake up crying.

Poems for Paula

“The Falklands “is a lonely place,
On earth, there is no worse.
We fought for Queen and Country,
It left me with this curse.

Until I die, I won't forget,
The screams I heard that night.
They'll live on in my dreams,
A funny word “Goodnight “

THE MINEFIELD SECRET

The Argies laid the minefields
They didn't tell us where
I'm standing in the middle
My only feeling, fear!

I wandered in whilst on patrol
A Recce in the dark
The Rupert said “An easy task,
A long walk in the park “

I feel so lonely standing here
Afraid to move my feet
I've made it safely this far
Sinking in the peat

Poems for Paula

“DON'T MOVE!” shouts my mate Chalky
Standing out of range
A bloody stupid thing to say
I do find people strange

With nothing else to do
My memory slips back years
To months of endless training
Each day would end in tears

Instructors preaching lessons
Of minefields in the night
Of claymore mines, and nasty things
That made you freeze in fright.

Don't walk across a minefield
Your steps will double number
Just run like Hell with giant strides
Less chance of blown asunder

Option two's your compass
The needle holding steady
Wave it out in front of you
Whilst crawling on your belly

Slowly, slowly, side to side
The needle shouldn't wander
Until it meets a buried mass
Of metal further yonder

Poems for Paula

Skirt around it inch by inch
Eyes fixed on the compass
If it moves, a mine's ahead
Don't want to cause a rumpus

Nearly there, two yards to go
A sign appears before me
"This Field's Been Cleared By Engineers!"
It's true! I'm safe, you see!

I run across to Chalky
He tells me I'm so brave
He hasn't seen the sign yet
The truth I think I'll save

But Chalky didn't make it
Days later he was gone
For years I've kept my secret
Alone, and just for one

So now's the time to "Fess up!"
What happened back that night
I was no hero Soldier
Just paralysed with fright

Poems for Paula

N.I.T.A.T

Down the rope
Helicopter swaying
Out into space
I'm silently praying

With full kit on
Feeling rather heavy
Rather be in the Naafi
Having a bevy

My gloves are burning
Sliding down the rope
Hit the ground
Not to fast I hope

Land with a thud
Breath knocked out
Barrel in the mud
One up the spout

Hit the ground running
Trip over wire
Breath comes fast
Lungs on fire

Snap VCP
Ten cars searched
' Exfil!' ' Exfil!'
Air gunner perched

Poems for Paula

Chopper hovers
Feet off the ground
Scramble on board
No voices, no sound.

The roar of the engines
Rotors awash
Smell of the Av-fuel
Bodies a' squash

Five clicks flying
Lose height again
Another location
Five tired men

Bandit Country
In and out
'Fast as you can lads!'
The Corporal does shout

All day long
Sun or rain
Just when you finish
You do it again

Why do we join?
Why do we do it?
'The Danger', 'The Rush'
The adrenalin through it

Poems for Paula

Friends think us mad
To risk all our lives
While they're sitting like Bees
In one giant hive

They never will fathom
They never will know
' Together with comrades '
We'll all ' Boldly go '

The men that trained us

FootNote:
NITAT is (Northern Ireland Training and Advisory Team)
VCP is (Vehicle Check Point)

Poems for Paula

PAST LIVES, PAST LOVES

'Paula's your name in this life
'Chantelle' in your last
You played the lead in both of them
With all the world the cast

'Gregory' was my chosen name
An English boy was I
Sent to France to fight the war
I dropped from out the sky

I met my 'Chantelle' in the woods
We touched and fell in love
A few short months we were as one
My 'Mamousselle', my dove

The 'Germans' took your Country
Swept through it like the plague
In Villages and in Townships
French faces looking vague

Torture and pure slavery
You suffered at their hands
Then you, a fighting Spirit
Decide to make a stand

You join 'The French Resistance'
And move up to the hills
At the tender age of twenty-one
You're honing fighting skills

Poems for Paula

Your job, to meet us agents
Our parachutes to hide
Guard us with your 'Sten- Guns'
Fighting by our side.

We ran the 'Nazi' Gauntlet
Through roadblocks we would blaze
They called us 'The Untouchables'
The Germans we'd erase

Then under torture someone broke
An ambush they did lay
Surrounded by the 'SS Troops'
As night turned into day

The bullets flying round our heads
Me wounded, then escaped
I left you to your Destiny
You captured, Tortured, Raped

I never saw your face again
The last I heard, you'd gone
On transports into Germany
Frightened and alone

No word of you for many Months
Missing, believed dead
Then 'Belsen' liberated
So many, starved and bled

Poems for Paula

Your name was on the records
Of 'Prisoners' in the camp
I flew across to find you
A place so dead and damp

I searched amongst the broken Women
Thousands wandered there
Then found someone who'd known you
My 'Chantelle' held so dear

Then came the news I feared so much
She'd seen you 'shot-at-dawn'
To hide the Ghastly evidence
Killed by those 'Devil's Spawn'

To England I returned that day
To live my life without you
Deepest sadness in my heart
The bravest Girl I knew

I lived until a 'Ripe old age'
But never did forget
The Girl I fell in love with
Her death my 'big regret'

But now onto another life
I've met my girl again
Spirits drawn together
'cause 'Soul-Mates' never wane

Poems for Paula

Of lives we have so many
I've spent them all with you
We play our parts eternally
For I know 'I Love You'

THE HIDDEN WAR

The operative lay watching
The dew of early Dawn
The smell of farmhouse cattle
Alone and so forlorn

Three days in this position
A hide just up the hill
Waiting for his target
So patient and so still

Just listening and watching
For goings to and fro
Peeing in his bottle
So as not to mark the snow

"The Emerald Isle "they call it
Not emerald now, just white
A stark bare Lunar landscape
Revealed by first full light

Poems for Paula

A light within the window
An open door aglow
A warmth spills out into the yard
The heat he'd never know

A man framed in the doorway
A dog pushed out to freeze
It lifts its head, alerted
Sniffing in the breeze

It looks right at me, can it see?
It starts to walk toward me
The doorway is now empty
Now just the dog and me

The handler taught me well
In practise and in theory
" Just curl up in a ball
And act like you're a fairy "

Time to put it to the test
Show that I'm no threat
I tuck my head in, close my eyes
My face all damp with sweat

The dog it comes and sniffs me
It cocks its hairy limb
And empties out its bladder
No threat I was to him

Poems for Paula

God bless that old instructor
Way back in seventy-eight
"Let dogs become your master,
Just let them dominate "

Satisfied, the dog walks off
Toward the farmhouse door
Gliding through the snowflakes
Paw prints on the floor

"Abort! Abort!" rings in my ear
An earpiece oh so small
The job's called off, another waste
Me freezing near the wall

Three days wasted, cancelled out
Another time perhaps
The target was just lucky
So near his final gasp

Tomorrow to another task
Maybe on, or off
But this is what I'm paid for
I shouldn't really scoff

Death means nothing to me now
The targets know the danger
Perhaps he'll die tomorrow
Stalked by one more stranger

Poems for Paula

Back to barracks now I go
To drink my fill of Whisky
Might be time to pack this in
Do something not so risky

Deep down I know that I'd be back
The danger is a drug
I'd crave the lonely blood rush
The Adrenalin I'd hug

Tonight I'll drown my sorrows
I'll have a little moan
'cause I know I'll be back out there
My job, my life, my home

Poems for Paula

SHOT AT DAWN BY DEFAULT WW1

I'm standing here alone
My back against the wall
My body is a trembling
I'm slumped, but once stood tall

My blindfold wet and cold
Sticking to my tears
I search my mind for future life
Beyond my 18 years

My knees transformed to putty
Can't support my weight
My hands tied by my Country
Which once I thought was great

They said I was a coward
They never asked me why
Court Marshalled here in secret
I know I'm going to die

I can't see what is happening
My blindfold bound so tight
The silence now is killing me
As Dawn appears from night

Poems for Paula

Get it over, get it done
Why do they make me wait?
I really need to urinate
Can't they see my state?

A clicking from the Rifle Bolts
A stream runs down my leg
I only have but seconds left
"Don't kill me "now I beg

The fear it makes me Vomit
The birds they start to trill
Then suddenly go quiet
The eerie Dawn stands still

The birds they sense a Death is near
Life ends right here for me
A ' Crack!' from all those rifles
In perfect harmony

Send a message to my loved ones
Don't listen, what they said
I was young and frightened
I shouldn't lie here dead

Poems for Paula

THE AFTERMATH

My Wife she'll never realize
Just what I have been through
For what I did endure
For what I've had to do

Now I'm back in civvies street
The fears should drift away
But simple things that happen
Bring instincts back to play

Walking past an alley
An itching in my feet
Thoughts of meetings long ago
Another secret meet

Sitting in a public House
A normal thing to do
A fear of being trapped there
Known only to a few

A car ride with the kids
Is all that I desire
A back-fire in the distance
Another gun for hire?

Poems for Paula

I meet a total stranger
In conversation mode
They do not understand me
I talk to them in code

On Guy-Fawkes night it's fireworks
Bang-Bang, into the night
Brings back thoughts of Ireland
It fills my heart with fright

Sometimes my hands tremble
When opening a letter
My friend that lost a hand
He should've known better

In crowds I'm claustrophobic
From riots long ago
And crowded pubs I used to love
No longer I will go

My instinct was survival
Each job I had to do
It's hard to break the habit
And start your life anew

So maybe if you see me
Alert, and so aware
You'll understand the way it was
Working over there

Poems for Paula

Forgive me if I'm edgy
And hug you when we meet
I'm frisking you for weapons
As we stand there in the street

How many years I'll be like this
No-one really knows
It's all about survival
Hitting highs and lows

The aftershock affects us all
In many different ways
I keep mine locked inside myself
Through nights and longer days

Until they find a cure
I'll wander throughout life
Helped along by no-one
Except my caring Wife

She'll stand along beside me
Not ask what I've been through
She'll never understand me
But there again, Do you?

Poems for Paula

MY FATHER (Burma WW11)

I wear his Dog-tags round my neck
His "Burma Star "hangs on the wall
My Dad he was a "Chindit "
A long, and a Short, and a Tall

A member of "The Special Force "
The Mule became his friend
Deep within the jungle
A hero till the end

A telegram to my Mam was sent
Missing, killed in action!
His Patrol wiped out behind Jap lines
Ambushed with their packs on

My Dad the sole survivor
But no one knew this then
Wounded in the leg
Losing all his friends

Three month through the Jungle
To get to friendly lines
Surviving on his instincts
Hacking through the vines

Poems for Paula

A look of shock on my Mam's face
As Dad knocked on her door
Her Husband's Ghost returning
His wounds now healed, but sore!

He never spoke about the war
His eyes they told the story
Bottled up inside himself
Not seeking any Glory

I joined the Army like him
To serve before The Crown
In Honour of his memory
Tried not to let him down

His Dog tags still hang proudly
From a chain around my neck
But I'd hand them in tomorrow
If I could have him back!

Poems for Paula

PICTURES IN MY HEAD

Somewhere deep inside my head
My memories filter through
Filed away forever
But not for you to view

I play them back like video's
Not always on demand
They seem to come up random
Exciting, never bland

I wish there was a pause control
To stop the nasty scenes
I want to watch the nice ones
Not wars, nor death, nor screams

A screen behind my eyelids
Shows pictures from my past
It's viewed to me in widescreen
Old comrades in the cast

The memory is a lovely thing
None of us should lose it
I only wish that I'd a choice
Just when, and where to use it

Untold tales of long ago
Go playing through my head
If I don't wake up 'for the end
I'm sure I'll wake up dead

Poems for Paula

My brain is getting older
But wiser as it grows
A catalogue of films
And re-makes of the shows

They say we lose our memories
As our bodies wilt with age
The good ones always seem to go
The bad ones still here, caged

I'd love a happy ending
Where all men end up equal
But for now I'll have to sit and watch
Waiting for the sequel

Perhaps one day I will forget
The things that happened then
But just now, in the meantime
I'll expel them with my pen

My poems they help me "Come to terms "
"A problem shared "they say
So I'll carry on my writing
Then perhaps they'll go away

Poems for Paula

WHO DARES DIES

I hear the sirens wailing
The blue lights flashing fast
Coming from the distance
Down the Motorway at last

A woman's head I'd cradled
Ejected from her car
The carnage all around her
Death near, yet not so far

The life is draining from her
Like wine, her blood is flowing
Spreading 'cross the tarmac
An icy wind is blowing

Her skin is cold now, lips so blue
She's dying in my arms
So slowly comes the Ambulance
Past fields and dim lit farms

She's bleeding out, she's fading fast
I can't just let her die
I kiss her clammy forehead
"Good-luck my dear, Goodbye "

Poems for Paula

I'm old now, frail and fragile
I've lived my life with glee
"Take me instead, give back her life.
I'll swap if you agree? "

Her eyes they slowly open
A "Thank you "on her face
I know she's going to make it
I know she'll win the race

I slowly step out in the road
Flashing lights they find me
They brake and skid across the ice
I stand there patiently

"Get out the way you daft old sod!"
A man shouts from nearby
I do not move, my promise kept
I'm thrown into the sky!

A woman on the stretcher
Broken, but alive
I've taken death upon myself
I've swapped so she'd survive

A lot of years I've wasted
Years without remission
I know now what it's all about
We all have one life's mission

Poems for Paula

MOTHER'S DAY

I'm glad you're not my Mother
I'm happy you're my Wife
Born way back in '64
To join me in my life

On Mother's Day you feel the pain
Of children all grown up
Forgetting it's your special day
All moody and abrupt

A breakfast and a cup of tea
I'll serve to you in bed
While all our Sons are lying in
You cannot wake the dead

I'll pamper you on this your day
To prove that I'm no sinner
With hungry children screaming out
' Come on Mum, what's for dinner? '

Relax my love, ignore them all
When they begin to moan
They've promised that they'll help you
When they've finished on the phone

' I'd wash the dishes Mother
But I've really got to dash
I'll be back home at 5 o'clock
To have my Beans and Mash '

Poems for Paula

And when your work is nearly done
They enter through the door
With soggy shoes all caked in mud
And spread it on the floor

‘ A woman’s work is never done ‘
Your Mother used to say
Except upon this special day
With children in the way

But come the night, just when you think
Your children never loved you
They put some chocolates in your lap
They’ve only pinched a few!

Then just before you go to bed
A tiring day you’ve had
They look up from their X-box game
And see you looking sad

They all come, and sit around
With kisses, hugs anew
All worth it when they whisper in your ear
‘ The best Mum, we love you ‘

And when they finally marry
Have children, just a few
They’ll realise this special day
Is what their wife is due

Poems for Paula

I CAME AND WATCHED MY FUNERAL

I came and watched my Funeral
The strangest thing to do
With lots of friends and family
Sitting in The Pews

I looked down on my coffin
An empty shell within
A temporary vessel
To keep my spirit in

The casket lost my interest
It's purpose fully served
A symbol now for Mourners
Much more than I deserved

My Wife, my Son, my Step-sons
Sitting all together
Crying at my passing
They thought I'd live forever

I stand behind my Wife
My love for her still smoulders
I kiss her on the lips
And hold her crumbling shoulders

Poems for Paula

Her crying halts, her breath is held
A tingling on her lips?
She puts her hand up to her face
With trembling fingertips

The moment it soon passes
Her shoulders turn back slack
Just a breeze, blowing through the Church
She knows I won't be back

I want to tell you "I'm ok,
I'm with you in your grieving.
I haven't got much longer,
For soon I will be leaving "

But now we live on different plains
Mine Spirit, yours on Earth
Not able to communicate
Just like we were at birth

My Mother comes from out the mist
"Come Son, we must go,
Just walk into The Light,
And join us in The Glow "

"My Earthly heart still loves you!"
I try to tell my Wife
It falls on silent eardrums
I'm not now part of life

Poems for Paula

The Light is like a magnet
Still pulling me away
I let her go, remove my arms
It's then she starts to sway

My energy has drained her
She faints onto the floor
"Good-bye my Wife, I love you "
She answers "Love you more!"

For one brief moment, we were one
Our frequency's combined
She's coming round now, getting up
Our Souls no longer blind

Although her tears still flow
She has this knowing smile
She now knows I'm ok
Across those endless miles

So now I go, with happy heart
No longer need to stay
She knows she'll join me one day
She knows that I'm ok

She leaves the Church still smiling
A friend says "You must miss him? "
A secret knowledge in her eyes
She knew who she'd been kissing

Poems for Paula

IN SPIRIT WE LOVE

Love is lost, love is found
A wedding ring is gold and round.
A circle never ending
A band of hope and light
It binds us both together
Protects us through the night

Till early dawn is rising
Till night becomes full day
I'll hold you in my arms my love
My bright and shining ray

A golden light around you
A halo round your head
An energy within you
Like sparks along our bed

We lie entwined together
Two bodies formed as one
Entangled in the sheets of life
Like music without song

We pay the World but little heed
The outside World looks in
We care not what they say or see
Our love is not a sin

Poems for Paula

Your tears they fall like melting snow
No smile upon your frown
I'll always be here for you
To lift you when you're down

Tears upon my pillow
Are they yours, or mine?
Do spirits cry, I wonder
From heaven, where you lie

Since the day you left this world
As quickly as you entered
I talk to you each lonely night
Does that make me self-centred?

I lay beside you every night
Although I cannot touch
An angel in our bed of souls
I miss you oh so much

Poems for Paula

I'LL COME BACK SOMEHOW

Watch for me when I have gone
I could be a moth, I could be a Swan
A bird on your shoulder, a feather from high
I could be a cloud, way up in the sky

The signs will be there
If only you'll see
The energy I'm sending
To you, from me!

Relax in bed and read my poems
The poems I wrote for you
Think hard of me my sweetheart
To help me to come through

I never meant to leave you
Alone and full of sorrow
My time on earth was finished
So remember me tomorrow

The times we spent together
So short they seem to you
Are timeless in this afterlife
You'd marvel if you knew

A flickering of light-bulbs
Could it possibly be me?
A message from the voids of Space
My Spirit's energy

Poems for Paula

That aftershave I used to use
You smell it with such ease
Is it me that you hear breathing?
Or the whisper of the breeze?

The softest touch upon your neck
The hairs alive and stiff
The question that is on your mind
“Is it me? ““What if? “

Look for things that don't exist
And always be aware
I'll always be around you
When life just don't seem fair

Though we're apart, you're not alone
Nothing's as it seems
Sleep soundly my dear Soul-mate
I'll meet you in your dreams

Poems for Paula

FROM THE OTHER SIDE

It's hard to be a Spirit
An Angel, or a Guide
I try so hard to speak to you
From on, the other side

Perhaps through 'Forces Poetry'
A message I will send
If I could just get through to you
I'd then achieve my end

You'd find the hidden meanings
I wouldn't make them boring
And if the words were short ones
I'd put them on 'The Forum'

You'd know the poems were just from me
I'd keep them Sad, and Lighter
And if my fingers couldn't type
I'd use a good 'Ghost-writer'

I'd try to put thoughts in your head
A 'Hunch', or 'inner voice'
And when I catch you Wondering
It's then I would rejoice

You'll hear me in the silence
A whisper on the breeze
An 'echo' in the Graveyard
A shiver when you freeze

Poems for Paula

These are the words I'll speak to you
With words you cannot hear
I'll find a way to reach you
Forever, always near

For love it has no barriers
In this world, or the next
Though Death has drawn us both apart
I could always send a 'Text'

ALWAYS

Through many lifetimes we have loved,
In future, present, past
Alone for years, yet not apart,
Together now at last

An early death, my soul-mate's gone,
I've endless years to wait
But soon enough, my time will come,
United with my mate

Passing over isn't hard,
Be you fat, or thin, or tall
It's the waiting that is in between
That's the hardest part of all

Poems for Paula

Where have you gone, my beautiful wife?
Taken in your prime
Wait for me my darling
They'll take me, when it's time

Your mission done, they took you home
My mission, not complete
We choose our lives before we're born
We stop, we look, we meet

Yes, life without you dearest heart
Is lonely now you're gone
I'll join you in a few short years
Forever joined as one

The hollow in your pillow
Your voice inside my head
I feel your presence near me
As I lie alone in bed

I'll bide my time my darling
'cause soul-mates never die
I know I'll join you one day
In our love nest in the sky

Poems for Paula

THE OTHER SIDE OF CHRISTMAS

The pavements glistened wet and cold
The doorway dank and smelly
No 'Christmas' cheer for this Man
Can't even watch the Telly

Just another day like yesterday
Shivering from the cold
Frost sores on his cracked lips
A 'Tramp' so he's been told

Not for him the 'Office Parties'
Spilling down the Street
Not by choice a 'Down-and-Out'
No family to greet

His glazed eyes are like windows
To memories long ago
Of Christmas past, and better times
His face near froze with snow

A drunk throws down a 'Fiver'
An inebriated stare
But it isn't cash he wanted
It's love, and home, and care!

Alone again, he starts to cry
His tears they roll and freeze
He didn't ask to be like this
His smell drifts in the breeze

Poems for Paula

Not long ago he had a Child
A wife, and fancy car
Till ' Post Traumatic Stress ' got him
From Wars he fought afar

His Family couldn't understand
This strange and sudden change
He understood it not himself
An illness out of range

One day he made a lonely choice
To stay, and hurt his loved one's?
Or walk away forever
Forget their love, be gone!

So by himself this ' Xmas Eve '
In a City far away
He'll sit and ' Celebrate ' alone
In despair he will stay

Now sitting in a doorway
He who once did dare!
Just another ' Drunken Bum! '
The Country didn't care

So if you, at Xmas
See a ' Hobo ' in the night
He might not be quite all he seems
For you and me he'd fight

Poems for Paula

He's lost the will to live himself
His spirit all has gone
This Xmas Eve, no energy
Where once a spark had shone!

In future try to help them
The ' Fallen ' of our land
Don't let them get unto this stage
Support them in their stand!

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

THE FED-UP FAIRY

I woke up this morning
A'top the Christmas tree
The topmost branch was tickling me
In places you can't see

All year I've rested in a box
Quiet, peace on Earth
Then early in December
My annual Christmas birth

I'm dusted off and polished
And hoisted up the ladder
Each year the tree gets higher
The humans just get sadder

Poems for Paula

Now I'm wedged against the ceiling
The artex is so rough
I've also got a fear of heights
I've really had enough

A spider's come to see me
Across its ceiling web
It's walking right across my face
A feeling that I dread

So get this Christmas over with
Dismantle this old tree
Put me back inside my box
Where I'll sleep peacefully

Poems for Paula

IN THE EYES OF A CHILD

A Poem Written For My Neighbours Daughter

' Horton ' is a village
Just this side of ' Staines '
It never snows in Horton
It's always wet, and rains

' Santa ' always finds us
Hidden as we are
He tries to use his Reindeer
But sometimes comes by car

Santa's always wandering
A Traveller just like me
I have one of his fairies
A'top our Christmas tree

I'm really good at Christmas
I love this time of year
And if I'm especially nice
He brings me lots of cheer

I get lots of nice presents
But never will forget
Those kids I see less fortunate
It is my worst regret

Poems for Paula

The kids that have no Parents
Those that live in 'Homes '
All the kids in hospital
Spending Christmas all alone

So Christmas morning, bright and early
Sitting by the tree
I spare a thought for all those kids
Less fortunate than me

To all those children everywhere
No presents for you bought
I wish you 'Happy Xmas '
You're always in my thoughts

Poems for Paula

AN ODE TO THE CANCER GODS

C..... Can't believe I've got it

A..... Anger when I have

N..... Nervous at the Doctors

C..... Cells all going mad

E..... Exhausted with the treatments

R..... Re-live your dreams with loved ones,
enjoy the love you have

THE CANCER DEVIL

Cancer fills my thoughts
All day and every night
It rules my life, it's always there
Alone, I shake with fright

It grows inside, a silent threat
A time bomb in my body
And when it blows, it spreads itself
Not even saying sorry

Poems for Paula

Alone I cry, alone I sob
“Why me? “I say to no-one
I feel so sorry for myself
Am I the only one?

Our time is now so precious
Every second counts
Every hour spent with you
Tiny, small amounts

I love you Paula darling
I promised you “Forever “
I’ll keep my promise sweetheart
You watch me, ‘cause I’m clever

I’m sick of feeling tired
I’m tired of feeling sick
I’m going to fight this Devil
It must think that I’m thick

I watch the flowers as they grow
Each day a brand new dawn
Each Sun-break is a bonus
I’ll fight this Devil’s spawn

The time I’ve left I’ll spend with you
Forever and a day
God willing, I’ll be with you
As we turn old and grey

Poems for Paula

We all face death at some time
Each of us will pass
So spare me just a few more years
Don't put me out to grass

I found you, and I've loved you
"Always "was our song
But now the Devil's after me
What did I do wrong?

They say I'm in remission
That's good news, so I'm told
I still feel like a ticking bomb
So please let me grow old

Just hold me when I'm angry
"Cuddles "when I'm sad
Forgive me being grumpy
This Cancer drives me mad

"It isn't fair!" I want to shout
To love, such little time
Make the most of every day
Together, so sublime

Starting with tomorrow
The fight I will continue
I'll slay this Demon Dragon
With every nerve and sinew

Poems for Paula

Stay near me my sweetheart
We'll slay this beast together
Look forward to our lives
Because "We are Forever!"

CANCER COUNTDOWN

I feel my time is finished
The fight in me has gone
Time to shed these earthly bonds
And join that mighty one

The 'Chemo' gave me some reprieve
Remission loomed ahead
Then cancer cells returned again
Now trapped at home in bed

I think about the treatments
Of endless days in care
Trying to extend my life
From cancer oh so rare

Then hope on the horizon
I went into remission
A chance to start my life again
To finish my life's mission

For months the illness left me
My hair began to grow
My family re-united
But little did I know

Poems for Paula

That cancer cells lie dormant
A ticking bomb within
To return when least expected
Invade me once again

'Don't give up hope' my family said
A futile thing to say
The cancer is 'Aggressive'
It wont just go away

I lie alone inside this room
Today I'm going to Die
I call upon my family
A chance to say 'Goodbye'

Don't be sad, and please don't cry
I journey now alone
The fear of Death is gone from me
It's my turn to go home!

Poems for Paula

THE HOSPICE

I wait inside this hospice
For death to come inside
My wife she comes to visit
Her tears she tries to hide

Silent words they come
From deep within her eyes
Each day of my survival
Delighted, but surprised

How much longer must I put
My loved ones through this grief
How much longer till the day
They lay the final wreath

‘ How are you today ‘
The Doctors always ask
A pretty silly thing to say
Don’t envy them their task

I’m feeling such a burden
Dependent on their skills
Tending to my every need
They must have iron wills

Poems for Paula

I pray each night to not awake
I ask it of the Nurse
Increase my dose of morphine
To end this cancer curse

But their task's to save a life
Not cut my journey short
If only I was able
This mission I'd abort

Words of comfort reach me
Repeated every day
My loved ones I don't envy
They don't know what to say

I had to laugh this morning
A card it came around
'Get well soon' it said to me
I'll have it on my mound

I woke this morning knowing
My day it had arrived
An inner voice within me
Prepared me for the slide

I slid into a coma
Late this afternoon
But still I saw my relatives
Gathered in my room

Poems for Paula

You don't need eyes to see such love
My soul already risen
I looked down on my family
Released from Worldly prison

My wife she clasped my hand
But little did she know
My shell was lying on the bed
Whilst I was in the glow

I want to tell her sorry
For ending life like this
For leaving her alone and sad
She gave me one last kiss

' Time of death recorded '
By Doctors standing near
' Your Husbands pain is over '
They whisper in her ear

I know she'll join me one day
United then we'll be
Together on our journey
The way it's meant to be

Poems for Paula

A RECIPE FOR PAULA

A pinch of love
A tablespoon of tenderness
A hint of sympathy
A touch of caress
And a teaspoon of tears
Mix these together in a touching bowl
Bake slowly in the warmth of our love
And you'll have the most wonderful cake I
could ever give you

Poems for Paula

MY DAFFY MAM

My Mam she was a funny old bird
She always said it wrong
“If I’m not in, then I’ll be out!”
We had to laugh along

We’d come in after drinking
With throbbing sore bad heads
She always had us terrified
She said “You’ll wake up dead!”

“I’ve left the gas on!” she would shout
She had us all in tears
‘cause she’d been all electric
For twenty-seven years

She banged her elbow on the stove
Or so it goes the rumour
“I’ve hurt my bloody funny -bone,
It’s lost its sense of humour!”

A visit to our Mam one day
A note upon the door
“The house is locked, but go right in,
The key is on the floor!”

Her rent man was a German
Not George, nor Jim, nor Jack
We heard her at the letter-box
His name it was “Karl Bach!”

Poems for Paula

Two-forty pennies to the pound
Back then her days were sunny
“One-hundred now is all I get,
They’ve stolen half my money!”

From Mam we got a letter
A busy day all in
“I’ve had all my teeth out,
And a Gas-hob fitted in!”

The Lord knew you were coming Mam
An Angel full of humour
He came to shake your hand
Or was it just a rumour?

So have fun Mam in Heaven
Like you did down here on Earth
Keep the Spirits laughing
With your humour and your mirth

I miss my Mam’s old sayings
I really thought her great
I bet she’s telling off Our Lord
Inside The Pearly Gates

So if you see an Angel
In curlers, floating by
It’s only my dear Mam
With laughter in her eye!

Poems for Paula

THE DYSLEXIC POET

It's a long poem since I wrote a time
The words they spell out funny
They leave my brain just perfect
On page as thick as honey

I know just what I want to say
I face you 'back to back'
I think of words in glowing white
They then come out in black

My tongue it works in unison
With lips that form my speech
I try to write out 'Sandy'
But then it spells out 'Beach'

I always understand myself
To me it seems quite normal
Then when my brain is chilling out
My pen is acting formal

If I write 'yes' it's probably 'no'
It comes out in reverse
People find me funny
To me it's just a curse

So listen in to what I write
And translate what I say
Don't laugh at my ability
To turn 'night' into 'day'

Poems for Paula

We aren't all perfect, no-one is
Each one, we have our faults
If politicians had their way
They'd lock us up in vaults

So if you meet me on the street
Stuttering and confused
Please treat me like a normal guy
Not one to be abused

Dyslexia rules k.o.

THE BELIZE SNAKE

A snake crawled in my sleeping bag,
I felt it on my leg.
I knew it was a female snake,
It said its name was "Peg "

I held it in my hand,
Its weight was next to 'nowt.
I didn't want it in here,
So then I threw it out.

But then I felt quite guilty,
The snake could do no harm.
In fact it felt quite cosy,
So slippery and warm.

Poems for Paula

The snake came back and slipped inside,
As I yanked up the zipper,
I cut the poor beast in half,
I felt like “Jack The Ripper “

Now I've got two snakes in my bag,
A tail and one long head.
All three of us together,
To share my shrinking bed.

Now they're moving up and down,
I hope they haven't mated,
I suddenly got hungry,
So then I ate it!

Poems for Paula

ASHTRAYCIDE

The government had a plan
To wipe us ashtrays out
"Let's implement a Smoking Ban "
In Parliament they shout

July the First, in one foul swoop
I'm instantly redundant
The tables now stand empty
Where once we were abundant

I miss the warmth of fag ends
And matches burning down
I miss the stubby fingers
All nicotine and brown

Sometimes we'd get stolen
From cafes, clubs, and bars
Taken home in handbags
Kidnapped in their cars

Now I'm used in bedrooms
For loose change from their pockets
Or even worse, for holding up
A bank of broken sockets

I miss the smokey atmosphere
The laughter and the glee
Sometimes I'd get a little drunk
If beer was spilled in me

Poems for Paula

The sounds of "Pass The Ashtray "
We'll never hear again
This phrase should be our epitaph
Let history not be swain

The people of the future
Will not know we existed
A little glass receptacle
Now bitter and all twisted

Thousands crushed and broken
Recycled, born anew
Wiped out in a single day
To please The Chosen Few

So I'm a worried ashtray
Waiting for my fate
Unless they pinch another one
And then I'll have a mate

So think of me, when in the pub
And wonder where I've gone
Sod the other ashtrays
Just "FREE THE ASHTRAY ONE "

Poems for Paula

THE BEER MAT CONSPIRACY

Have you noticed tables
Empty in the pub?
Devoid of cardboard Beer mats
Where stacks of them once stood

“The Ashtrays “& “The Speed Humps “
They both have had their say
But what about us Beer Mats?
It's time we had our day

No Newspaper announcements
Nothing on the news
We've all just disappeared
No Ballot of our views

Who made this mad decision?
To take us all away
Whilst Drinkers in their Millions
Rely on old Drip trays

Down & outs did use us
For plugging holes in shoes
And wedged in wobbly table legs
And blocking up the loo's

Lovers rowing at the table
Tearing me apart!
I'm crying tears of dripped beer
Even Beer Mats have a heart

Poems for Paula

Drunken games of ' Frisbee '
Were played with me before
And love poems written on me
But none of this, no more

The game of ' Flip-the-Beer Mat '
You won't see nowadays
Now flashing ' One-Armed Bandits '
Amuse in other ways

One thing always puzzled me
While thinking, this and that
"Which tree was my Father? And
Why were we all called ' Matt? "

Remember us dear drinker
A heart it beats within us
My favourite ' Tipple ' of the night
Was when they spilt "The Guinness "!

I went off for recycling
Gone back to ' Meet my Maker '
You're probably just now reading me
Upon recycled paper

Poems for Paula

THE LONELY SPEED HUMP

I'm a single Speed Hump
I wish I had a friend
The nearest neighbour I've got
Is down, and round the bend

With car fumes I'm Exhausted
The wheels they make me Tired
In rain I get all soggy
In mud I feel all Mired!

The Motorists all hate me
Because I slow them down
Especially the 999's
Whilst speeding through the Town

Company cars are worst of all
Of me they have no fears
It isn't their insurance
That pays for those repairs

I get the blame when baby's sick
In Fathers brand new motor
He's going far to fast
Not giving one iota

I'm stared at by those "Cats Eyes "
All seeing, watching me
Winking when the headlights pass
Lighting up with glee

Poems for Paula

Teenagers stop on top off me
Throw "McDonald's "on my head
I look forward to those moments
At least then, I get fed

The drunks they stop to urinate
A flood of yellow rain
Then vomit on my stripy hump
It flows off down the drain

One day we'll form a Union
Unite against those cars
And hold our Union meetings
In back rooms of the bars

We'll not be needed someday
When drivers reach their senses
Like our friends "The Ashtrays "
Departed, and lamented

Until that day I'll lie here
Await the next hard thump
Another mound upon the road
A sad and lonely Hump

Poems for Paula

I CAN CANOE, CAN YOU?

There was a canoe from ' Seaton Carew '
Set sail across the sea
Where it went, nobody knows
What a mystery

On it went, around and around
Cross Oceans far and wide
Turning up in ' Panama '
Sailing with the tide

Did it go, or did it stay?
The plot it only thickens
It's now become a story
To rival old ' Charles Dickens '

The ending of this strange old tale
Of this there is no end
To try and figure this one out
Will send you round the bend

Why go away and disappear
To turn up five years later?
He could've said he was eaten
By some old Alligator

Poems for Paula

So, Canoe are you out there?
Floating still, at rest
Roaming ' Ghostly Oceans '
Just like ' The Marie-Celeste '

I'll bet you're buried in the sand
A boat without a crew
Which sandy grave do you lie in
Perhaps in ' Seaton Carew? '

SPACE TO DRIVE IN

I envy all those Astronauts
No traffic jams up there
A highway through the Heavens
Of motors it is bare

No traffic cones to bar the way
No roadwork's in the sky
No roundabouts to slow us down
No parking ticket guy

Speed limits, they just don't exist
Yellow lines, there's none
From space walks, you can safe return
Not find your motor gone

Poems for Paula

Accidents are rarely seen
No traffic lights to jump
No points upon your license
No dreaded high, ' speed humps '

Of course, they have their problems
They're Human just like us
Like Spacecraft running out of fuel
'can't come home on the bus

No Burger Kings or KFC's
To feed them on their way
No 'Travelodge' upon the Moon
To bed down on their stay

They have to dodge the Meteorites
Space debris all a clutter
And eating all that 'Milky Way'
Will make their stomachs flutter

I can't imagine what it's like
Crammed tight inside those ships
And come the 'Aztec-two-steps'
Your partner gets 'The Squits'

At least down here you have a choice
To open up the door
But up there in 'The Shuttle'
They're gagging on the floor

Poems for Paula

So down on Earth I think I'll stay
The roads my saving grace
I never will complain again
When there's 'No Parking space'

And when I watch the Shuttle
Take off into the Sky
I'll think of spacemen with the Squits
And the other poor Guy

Trapped inside that tiny craft
No windows he can open
Clothes peg stuck upon his nose
For fresh air he is groping

So keep your job you Astronauts
I'm happy with my ravings
If someone 'Trumps' inside my car
I'll throw them on the pavements

Poems for Paula

THE CLINICAL THERMOMETER

I have my ' ups and downs '
As all thermometers do
The rise and fall of Mercury
Through ' highs and lows ' like you

I feel my pressure rising
I'm at the ' end of my tether '
I don't feel quite so good tonight
In fact I'm 'under the weather '

I'm kept inside a cardboard tube
Stored until I'm used
If you knew what I was used for
You'd think I was abused

My Cousin tried to talk to me
A ' Barometer ' by trade
Working in a Hospital?
He thinks I've got it made

If he just knew what I went ' through '
The places I have been
Between the hidden ' cavities '
Dark places I have seen

One minute I'm as cold as ice
Then hit the old ' hot spot '
The Rectal Probe for Temperature
A place I'd rather not!

Poems for Paula

I meet lots of nice people
Though I never see their face
I'm always ' down the other end '
A ' Target ' like an ' Ace '

My work it sounds so Glamorous
"It's Not!" I want to sob
I get stuffed every single day
To me it's just a ' Bum Job '

THE ELIXIR OF LIFE

I'll tell a tale of nightmares
Of spooks and Ghostly things
I'll tell a tale of Hallowe'en
And fear that night time brings

In Welsh it's "Nos Calan Gaeaf "
In English "Hallowe'en "
Along the Anglo Borders
It's something in-between

Jack-o- Lanterns, lit by candles
Pumpkins brought to life
These things hold no fear for me
They remind me of my Wife

Poems for Paula

Black and pointed Witches hats
Amongst the Stars unseen
Stealth Aircraft in the night sky
Elude the Radar screens

Witches in formation
Flying through the night
Broomsticks in the turbulence
A "Broomstick Airways Flight "

So many Witches visiting
Shoulders crouched and bent
"Bed & Breakfast's "booming
So many "Brooms for Rent "

The shops are doing well
An advert "Brooms for hire "
And firewood sticks are selling out
For Witches burnt by fire

They use this night for Weddings
To Warlocks preaching Doom
Hobgoblins introducing
The Devils "Bride & Broom "

Then off upon their "Honeygloom "
Where Earth & Hell don't mix
A Witches RAF Flight
Squadron 666

Poems for Paula

My Mum-in-law goes missing
October every year
She tells us she's on holiday
Do we believe her? Yeah!!

My Wife's Mother works part-time
Like Santa, once a year
I'm sure she works for "Rent-a Witch "
Each day she "Bends my ear "

So fear not on "All Hallow's "
And get down to the Pub
Protected by The Landlord
From Witches and their club

Keep drinking The Old "Guinness "
A shandy for the Wife
An age old Magic potion
The "Elixir of Life!"

Poems for Paula

THE INNOCENT EGG BEATER

I've been called ' An egg beater '
A crime of which I'm free
They want to lock me in the drawer
And ' Throw away the key '

I've a friend who'll vouch for me
His name is ' Bertie Bowl '
Eggs meet him, shells unbroken
I swear, they go in whole

Humans cause the damage
White hatted, nasty men
They ' break the will ' of eggshells
' Cracking Yokes ' about them

It's not me beating up the eggs
A Chef's hand is the Boss
They mix them into Omelettes
In frying pans they toss

I am just an instrument
I only follow orders
A Soldier of the kitchen
Accused of all egg murders

Round and round they make me go
The whisking makes me dizzy
Like being on a ' Fairground ride '
I'm really kept quite busy

Poems for Paula

' Deserts ' are my worst nightmare
Egg whites start to scream
Whipped until they stiffen
To use for ' Whipping cream '

The ' Blender's ' got its eye on me
' Brenda ' is her name
She's posh, and all electric
' Take-over ' is her game

I work quite hard to please ' The Chef '
So he won't discard me
Work my ' wires ' to the bone
To prove my worth to he

I'm getting sick of all these eggs
Life ' Revolves ' around them
I try to ' Whip them into shape '
Be proud for ' Mother Hen '

Look out! Here's the Postman
More recipes he'll bring
A ' Whipping Post ' is all I am
The pepper makes me sting

Don't blame me, or my Victims
Forever we will beg
Just think about our misery
' Raise a Toast ' to scrambled egg!

Poems for Paula

We'll meet you in the kitchen drawer
In darkness, hold a meeting
Our hero ' Humpty-Dumpty '
We'll fight, and not ' be beaten '

So when you're whisking eggs
Hands moving ever brisker
Think of us, we're ' innocent '
We ' wouldn't hurt a whisker '

THE RUDOLF MYSTERY SOLVED

' Rudolf ' was a female
Of this I have no doubt
'cause early in the winter
' Male ' Antlers they fall out

Females keep their Antlers
Till early in the spring
So ' Rudolf ' helping Santa
Is not a ' Man-Type ' thing

Unless he was a ' Eunuch '
Playing with ' Snowballs '
Barking with a high-pitched voice
Decking all those halls

Poems for Paula

'cause ' eunuchs ' keep their Antlers
Through-out the winter break
They only lose the other bits
That Santa sometimes takes

So if you see ' Old Santa '
With Rudolf on his sleigh
Just call her ' Mrs Rudolf '
And wave her on her way

WHAT AM I?

My Father was ' King Edward '
His nickname it was ' Spud '
He had great plans for me one day
Succeed him as I should

But I had no ambition
To sit upon the Throne
On TV I had longed to work
To comment and to moan

To talk upon those ' Chat Shows '
Where I'd be ' Skinned Alive '
Working for ' The BBC '
Or even ' Channel Five '

Poems for Paula

I'd dig up loads of dirt
Do secret sort of deals
And count the ' Eyes ' upon my ' Skin '
And pimples on my ' Peel '

All of this I did achieve
My dream it did come true
And then I met a ' Princess '
And ' Fell in Love ' with you

But you didn't want to know me
You said "I'll catch you later.
I'd love you if you were a ' Prince '
But not a ' Commentator ' "

Poems for Paula

THE MISSING SOCK

Can anyone out there help me?
I'm alone and I could cry
My Twin he has gone missing
And 'They've hung me out to dry!'

I used to go 'On-line' a lot
With a friend that I called 'Peg '
The pups they used to play with me
Whilst sitting up to beg

The Hamster used to hunt me
When I felt 'Down at heel'
He'd hide me in the corner
Ready for to steal

But now my Brother's missing
A common hazard that
We were called ' A right pair '
Whilst chewed on by the cat

My Brothers name was 'Lefty'
The one that had the hole
I really miss my ' Sole-mate '
Please find him, make me whole

I searched upon ' The Internet '
"Lostsock.com" was the first
I met socks with a 'Fetish'
Which only made things worse

Poems for Paula

'Socks-reunited, Socks-rescue'
I really tried them all
But I couldn't find my Brother
I even looked out in the hall

So now I'm getting desperate
Running fast out of idea's
Please help me find my Brother
I'm going to 'Box his ears'

If he returns I promise
I'll try to ' Toe-the-line '
I'll cancel his replacement
Knitted from old twine

I think he may be Partying
To Nightclubs he would scoot
He's always been a loner
And he's got ' Club Foot '

A last resort was called for
999 I dialled
I asked them to send ' S.O.C.O '
The Sergeant got all riled

"Don't waste my time with nonsense,
I've better things to do.
I can't be looking for a sock,
I'm looking for a shoe!"

Poems for Paula

Smelly feet I don't miss
The smell of ' Cheesy butter '
Trapped in by the stitched up holes
"Darned Sock!" I hear you mutter

I feel all weak and weary
My heels all worn and brown
And now that my elastic's gone
I keep on ' Falling down '

I lay alone inside the drawer
Feeling like a ' Muppet '
Until ' The Toddler ' found me
Now I'm a ' Child's Hand Puppet '

Faces painted on me
A playroom my location
Now rescued from the sock drawer
I've found my life's Vocation!

