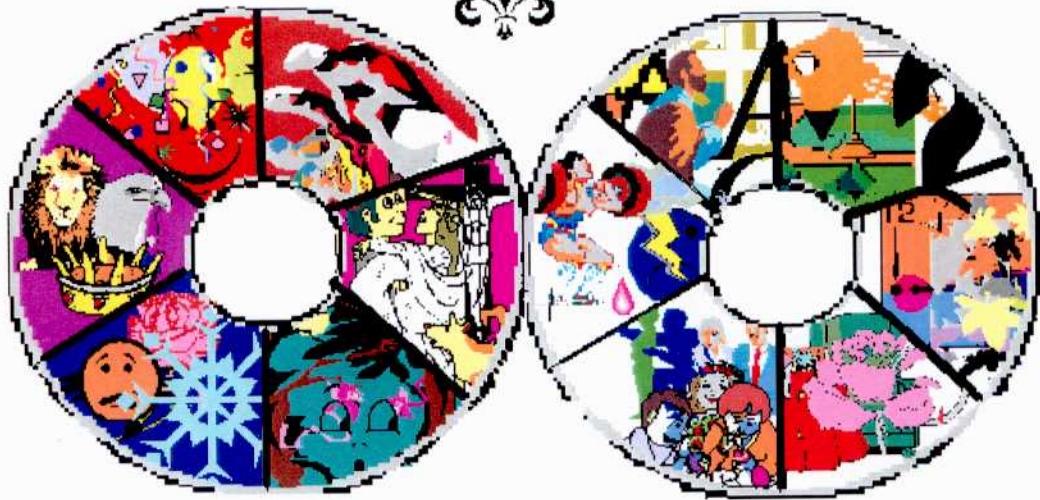


ODE TO THE WHEELS OF THE WORLD



11627013

Ode To The Wheels Of The World:

I pray that the great red curtain
That covers the truth,
Might be swept away
To reveal the machinations of the earth,
Or at least open the staircase
Leading to the bottom
Of life,
That burrows under stress and strife,
helping and doing,
Speaking and sharing
And thinking.
To find the reality which
Underpins it all.

2.

I will descend,
Till I can descend no longer,
Into the abyss of men's hearts
To find out by what art
Our worlds are created,
And hated,
And torn down.

I will explore
And I will discover
The recipe for tears,
And the oven where they're baked.
I will unearth the cogwheels and gears
Whose creaks and rumblings
Give birth to live and light;
Whose power drives men on
To both good,
And evil.

3.

All my plans have been arranged,
My journey can begin.
But waves of trepidation break
Against my heart,
Whispering what others
Have found within.
The pioneers of the depths of matter,
Yearning to know what lay beneath
The froth and bubble in their tubes
Were rewarded with the revelation,
Of a horrifying truth:
That all things concrete,

All that we can see,
All we perceive
Is built on
Nothingness.
What then will I find,
At the bottom of civilisation?

4.

But fear of the unseen
Has never been
Able to defeat
A heart longing to meet
The truth.
So I descend
Into the shaft
Of the mine
Where reality resides
Beneath the soil of time.

5.

No amount of eagerness
Prepared me
For the arduous exhumation.
Only adding to the
Pitifulness of my figure

As it seemed
In that great hall into which I stumbled.
Whoever was watching,
Saw a creature,
Dwarfed by dizzying heights
Whose weary eyes wondered
If all the lines they saw
Had been tied to the stars
When they rose to heaven
Whose sweat, black as ink,
Flowed like gathered silk
And looked to me
Like enough to write
The history of the world
Yet could never write words
To describe the roar
With which the leaden mountains
Of machine collided.
Or the white red heat
Of the steam
From furnaces like bushfires.
How could it?
For it was clear:

The cosmic heart of the earth

Was here.

6.

A symphony of surreal sounds

Crept into my ears

And visions of all the hopes and fears

Of humanity

Brushed against my eyes.

The toll of a bell,

The scream of a child,

The rippling ring

Of the tambourine,

One thousand and one sighs.

All tearing toward the surface,

To be heard by man,

Or lost.

7.

Clearing the confusion,

I began to see

The direction

From which this torrent

Of sights and sounds tumbled.

And towards it I crawled

And scrambled and swam
Until I arrived,
And stood and watched
In awe,
Is two intermeshed turbines grumbled
Churning and turning out,
The river of life itself.

8.

Each turbine had six spokes
And on each spoke were six letters,
In an unknown golden tongue.
Galactic orbital axles
Heaved, scraped and creaked,
Dragging their branches along
Until smack!
Connection sends showers of sparks
From where the two wheels meet,
Falling like raindrops
Into a golden river at my feet.

9.

Arms one and two clash-
The river swells,
Carrying me away...

To a land where dreams
Come true,
Of lazy ease and pleasure,
Store houses full of treasure,
Where no one hungered.

Then
It bore me below,
From whence this plenty seemed to flow
Here need and hunger was
Everywhere
And even the emptiness
Grasped at the air
Fervently wishing that,
Something was there.

And then that emptiness became a fire,
Broke out above and below
Destroying everything in its path
And tracing out the letters:
"Objects meet desire."

10.

As the life-blood flowed
Back to the heart
I was shocked:

The engines had kept turning

Ignorant and implacable;

Stone cold whilst the

Inferno was burning,

Laughs were dancing, and

Tears were flowing.

The wheels pressed inexorably on.

My mind had not long

Enough to scramble into

Order, before a grinding

Sound precluded

More golden rain,

And we were gone...

To Devotion Meets Relation:

To gentle hands wiping

At trails of tears

In the dust

Of an inner city street.

To a husband carrying his wife

Who cannot move her feet.

To drudgery, obscurity,

Forgiveness, admiration,

To sleepless nights

And gentle, warm embraces.

Then one spark grew,

Became a tree,

Was cut down,

And became a cross

Where true devotion hung,

For all of us.

11.

Returning, the heart

Begins to beat

And create two men

Who start to fight.

One is threatening;

One seems so;

One is evil;

One doesn't know.

The former comes like an old friend,

Slips his hand into mine

As if it had been

His forever.

It's a perfect fit.

It seems as if

I remember him,

From somewhere.
His warm words of warning
Wrap themselves around
My heart and nest there,
Softening my soul
When it needed steel.
His beautiful embrace melted
Through my skin and
I realised in horror,
I had been made
Part of him,
And he of me.
His words resounded
Through my soul-
"I am fear,
I'll make you whole."
"I am adversity,
I'll make you complete."
Said the other,
Rising to his feet
As fear disappeared
Through my skin.
I glared up at

Adversity's boulder head
And towering body that
Nourished black spines
Stained red with blood.

I saw the power

In his teeth

And the fire in his eyes

And fear whispered

To me, deep within.

"He lies." then

Adversity shot

Toward me like

Streaks of stampeding

Lightning, stomping,

Thumping, trying

To crush me,

Cutting rings of fire around me

As I ricocheted,

Dodging and darting

From wall to wall.

I fall down...

And asleep-

"The spirit is willing but the

Flesh is weak" - at the knees.

I cannot go on,

Adversity will destroy me.

My strength is shattered

Into grains of sand

And I cannot stand.

Dreaming through clouds of

Sleep, I thought

Heard adversity sigh

"Fear will not protect you child;

I do not spare

The meek nor mild.

You will ride

Its slippery tide

Of terror inside your mind

Until you know,

You cannot hide.

Then the numbness of fear,

You thought had been your friend,

Will snuff your fire

And my trials will be

Your end.

They should have been

Your beginning

13.

These snarled murmurs,
Shifting smokes of sleep,
Skirting round my dream,

Were pierced by

A howling sighing cry

Which, catapulting out

Of the soul of adversity,

Which stabbed me out of sleep

And shook the world...

...But not the wheels

Rising before my

Languid lids,

Forever turning,

Eternally churning,

Out the river of life

That flows under

Stress and strife

And out into ourselves,

Weaving the tangled web

We weave when first

We set out

To live.
It rushes out
When I speak,
When you dream,
When they think.
It gurgles between
Myself and what
I do, between
Him and those he loves
And between
Me and You.
It boils, twists and turns
Around the world.
It crashes and splashes,
Whelms and drowns,
Whilst the monstrous machines crash
Round and round,
And I know I cannot
Be further down
Than them.
They make the world.

13.
I am here, then,

In the abyss of
Men's hearts
From whence the lifeblood
Flows which stained
The great red curtain red
And keeps the maze
Of mirrors inside
Ourselves and out.
Where we lie about distortions
And present each other
With contortions
Of what we will never
understand:
Our lives,
so complex,
The puzzle of our minds
and their offspring-
The wheels made them all.

14.

And as these churning,
Turning turbines
Continue to create
In these pages following

I'll continue to relate,
What I'm mining
In this mine
That lies beneath
The soil of time,
It's not that hard to find:
It all comes from the wheels
And the wheels are
Human minds.

15.

My eyes have been opened
So I can comprehend
What's written on the
Spinning legs,
Of those two spiders-
It makes sense.
I see those words
In everything,
In every single web
They spin
Inside my heart,
Inside my brain,
Between the lines-

The webs and words
Are the ink
With which society
Was written.

16.

The first wheel is
The things your feel,
The forces punching
At your pulse,
Plucking the strings
That make one shiver:
The engine that
Drives passion
And paints facades
Of crocodile tears
And smiles
With which we trace
False trails for ourselves
And others.
It bears the seals
Of Fear and Pride,
Desire, Devotion,
Sorrow and Joy

From which all things arose.

17.

The second wheel

Drives the first.

It carries our partners

In the waltz

Of life-

The leading ones:

Objects, Choice,

Adversity,

Change, Belief,

Relationships

Whose mutual

Battles have

Built the world

With blood. But

Each spoke still must

Move with others

To produce sparks

Of actuality, the wheels

React, grind and

Grate to stir the

World and create

The art and create
The stories and create
The lives of man...
Which are altogether
Bad. Or so we think
But I saw Sorrow
And Belief
And witnessed what
Happens when
they meet and...

There is no anger
If I don't believe
It's bad, and
There is no sorrow
If I don't believe
It's sad.
If I don't believe
I go somewhere,
I will weep and wail,
And my heart will falter
along life's trail
If I believe if am going nowhere.
Belief seems as much

The food of sorrow

As pain.

Belief fills pain

And so we call it

Painful.

18.

Incandescent glows

Of aching, in

The river fade

As sorrow and

Conviction

Part.

In the factory of men,

Again, we find

Ourselves:

Among the clatter

Of a billion

Heated moments

In time,

Carried on floods,

Churned out by the

Intermeshed turbines

Where Pride and Choice

Are next to Collide.

19.

I meet Choice but the other

Is more difficult to find.

Pride: choice's doppelganger,

Gate to enticing paths

Unseen and barrier to

The long, lost and lowly passage

We see and could travel on.

He gently goads and guides Choice,

Keeps from him all maps but his

Yet like a shadow Pride will,

Never leave until darkness

Envelops Choice Pride and all...

To escape this darkness

And removal I push

Back towards the heavy

Churning flood from

The grinding rasping wheels:

Dragging, dragging,

Turning, turning

And churning, churning on

Sculpting such strong

Slender bars for our

Inescapable prisons

As these...

20.

...And yet I cannot

Detest them,

Hungrily awaiting

The next turn

In the river

Without which

I would

Die.

The last spoke is Joy

And it tingles again-

The rippling ring of

The tambourine, celebrating

Change,

And playing a strange song

Whose words

Are with me now:

"I would like to take a chessboard and

Stretch it across time.

Its orderly variety,

Of black surrounded
By white surrounded
By black stretching,
Out until to where soil
Meets sky.
Where moving forward
Guarantees changes,
And no one, that I know,
Can move any
Different way.
We all see contrast
That lights
Up joy yet
All we love
In black, or white
Will be sure to be repeated
Further down the line
Never destroyed
By the changes
Of time.
I would like to
Take a chessboard
And stretch it across life..."

And so the cymbals sang
Long into the heated,
Boiling,
Subterranean night.
Whose stillness
Never existed to
Be rent by
The exploding,
Shattering *repoussage*¹
Of the churning turning axles
Screaling², past each other
Rewinding the river,
Rearranging their
Positions
To begin again.
A journey on
Which I was to join them.
As new spoke
Clashed with new
Forces and the molten
Lava of life

¹ And adaptation of the French for to “to repel or push back” me which I felt was the best word to describe the winding back of the wheels.

² I invented my own onomatopoeic word here as I have seen other writers such as William Goulding do.

Flooded me once again,
Bringing me into the
City of Death.

21.

On a gravestone there

It read:...

“ Lucinda died of lusting’s love
That drew the life from her tender bud.

The thick and luscious fly leaves

Folded around perfumed dew

Enclosing a sweet central nectar-

They were just inviting you,

To sever her stems,

And drain her life

Like a voracious

Summer wind,

And press her in

That notebook

In your hand.

They were just

Asking you to,

Weren’t they?”

I stole away the blackened

Book I found- musting²

In my pocket.

And wandered

'Twixt the tombstones

Until the river took

Me up once again

And bore me past

The place

Where in the misty,

Distant past

Devotion fought

The foe of Fear...

And won:

“ I'll love you always, dearest friend:

When the nightmares come

I'll hold your hand;

I'll wake you up to make them end.

And when you're die they'll find me there

Cushioning your bed,

And kissing your head,

Using my tears to bathe your hair”

So Anne vowed to her sister soul,
Weeping from wounds deep
That disturbed her sleep
And in her heart had carved a hole.

Unbearable the pain became,
Near the station
A train roared on
Through the dark mists of drumming rain.

Nonchalantly pulsing forward
Having no respect
For the agonies
Of those without or those aboard.

Angry, Anne's friend stood and chided,
And placed herself in
The heartless train's path
She'd end her life she had decided.

Anne came and whispered in her ear,
"When the nightmares come
I'll hold your hand."

I will help you now come my dear.

But statuesque she faced soon death

Anne could not wake her

Up and change the end

Her friend would be no more unless...

She could arrest the trains advance.

"Stop!" Anne screamed and faced

The leering engine.

Unseen she was by a mischance.

As the sun rose she found them there.

Both were dead with Anne

Cushioning the bed

And, with blood, washing her friend's hair.

"What a terrible

Tale!" I rebuked

The river for

Winding out such horrors

And wandered dazed

Through the unkempt graves

That over millennia

The wheels

Had made.

23.

A rumbling queried if I feared the fate

Of these forgotten souls:

Extinguished lamps, in fetid holes,

That time and earth carved up and ate.

Or did I believe that life would continue

And fear eternal pain-

Damnation if God saw a stain,

Or hell of my faith proved untrue?

I said my belief keeps me from fear

For I know I'll live forever

With a God whose love'll not forget me.

Without fear my path becomes clear

I'll plough right on, ceasing never,

Free from dread, knowing Him I'll see.

The rumbler was

Bewildered.

Then bursting forth,

In bubbles, the river

Answered

24

“ So...

That is why you came

Many and adventurer

I have buried

In that place

For the intrusion

And daring to

Face

Me.

You, I will spare.

If you can prove

What you said

There- that through

Belief you have

Conquered fear.”

So I was plunged,

Again, into the

Viscose molasses of

Earth’s lifeblood

And born off into

The sunset of more

Poems such as
Those born out
Of hardship and sorrow
When choices are
Like twisting marrow-
So very painful
To make...

For when you take a rock
And toss it, in the stillness
Of a glassy pool
And its sharp point
Pierces the flesh
Of a speckled, swimming fish,
Peacefully floating through
The amber waters.
How were you
To know?

You had not meant to cause a pain
You simply chose to throw a stone,
And now you're terribly alone
Because of a choice that
You chose to make
That came back to haunt

You in the night
As the spectre of
A horrible mistake.

25.

I know that feeling
All too well
It's mortal's very first
Taste of hell
So I was far
From unwilling
To leave
When the river took
Me up.
Returning to
Those stalwart spokes,
Standing so strong
As if they never
Feared that
Anyone would ever
Care about there
False steps, I
Was whisked once more
Into the whirlpool

Of sights and sounds
Where I had first heard
Their creaks and turns.

There colours
Were melting and
Sounds were screaming
And scraping, whirling

Round to drown

The ears.

26.

Struggling to the surface,

I arose to see

Pride and Change crash

Before I was washed

In again by their

Rain to witness,

In instantaneous

Clarity a picture that

Was most disturbing:

A Peacock spread his tail.

On the gusty autumn wind his

Feathers floated down.

Then the image was

Erased, into crumbling
Fragments, broken
And carried on the
Whirlpool I was leaving,
To reminisce on joyous times.
For Joy and Objects were
Approaching each other
With the turning of the wheels
As I fondly remembered...

The magic we invested
In those sparkling tinsel fragments,
Flying in the air,
Wreaths woven from plastic bags
Like totems on the door.
We cooked, we pasted, we basted,
We pinned, we hung, and we strung.
All so we could have these
Objects that made the little
Stomachs dance for joy
And little noses smell
Christmas in the air.
The beauty of those objects
Brought the joy.

But I realised Joy,
Is in the eyes of the beholder.

As is beauty...

And the wheels themselves can appear

Beautiful,

In their monstrosity

And their power

As they push out the undulating lava

Path in the bed

Of every Human head.

I stand dripping now,

Aground in its

Shallows, like a silhouette

Against a glowing

Sunset of lively activity.

I know what will

Take place now.

The cycle is full circle

And must begin again.

And the wheels rewind

Beneath the soil of time,

And recommence with

War-

What happens when

Desire for Choice

Overcomes all...

The red banners of battalions

Spread out like armoured waves

Washing Freedomtown's hills

With sacrificial blood

To bring Choice home.

"We will not be defeated" –

Hearts beat and blood heated.

"We will affirm our basic rights!"-

Thousands rode off into the night.

"Let the enemy tremble as they hear our cry." –

Everyone felt ten feet high.

On the battlefield,

The heaving mass of stinking

Sweating, flailing bodies

Presented itself to those

Brave men.

Who, tentatively, dived straight in.

And the war closed in

On every side-

Gunshots resounding,

Swansongs echoing
Bloodstains stinking,
Sticking to their skin-
Not one of them came home again.

They fought for good
But who made them fight,
Die for what was theirs by right.

If man desires Choice
Let him be filled
For without it he
Might as well be killed.

Say those wheels that
Churned out wars to
Fuel their river
So it could encrust
Upon the bareness of the earth
To build palaces, and princes
To live in them.
I'd stand up and berate them
If my awe
Would not strike me down.
Instead I wait for
The children of

The second spokes-

Devotion and Objects-

To fly down,

Catch me and,

Take me back

In time, to a place where

I lived half my life....

They were ergonomic now,

Washed smooth by waves

Of time;

Devotion had built them

And devotion would

Tear them down.

The rickety printed steps,

Had outlasted the hammer and nail

That built them and

The hands that held those nails-

Unevenly calloused conductors

Of the love a husband bore.

With each blow of the axe,

With each whittling scrape,

Each sanding stroke, each coat of paint

He imbued the wooden joins

With love and devotion
That glowed a red carpet,
To carry his bride over
Towards the threshold.

The new owners had decided
To replace the steps-
A simple alteration,
Would update the house
And greatly increase,
Its monetary value...

The journey
(Or was it a vision?)
Cleared away again
To reveal the two turbines
Continuing to create;
As the third spokes
Crash I hear myself
Cry the reason why
I came to this place:
Because lack of understanding
Brought Fear into my Relationships...

"Behold mankind my heart is open

And on an altar to a friend
And yet mankind my heart has broken
And blindly I my heart defend.
If only I understood what you were thinking
I only I did not fear censure,
Then my heart would not be sinking
A smile can a lonely soul assure.
Whispering nettles in secluded corners,
Lying about what we truly feel,
All breed fear among close brothers,
We use our mouths to harm not heal.
Don't be frightened or be fearful
For both of those make others tearful."

I quieted the crying self

And made it stand erect.

Then the noise of the

Fourth spokes

Awoke it and,

It cried again...

"You take from me

More than you give;

You clip me in a frame,

Piercing me with ribbon drawing spears,

I cannot give you gratitude.”

Don't you demean my worth

When you seek to increase it with gifts?

I have enough,

Protecting me any more

Will crush me.

Please let me suffer.

Humour my pride.”

My rushing torrent of tears

Became one

With the viscose river,

Born on a purging

Ride of pain

To where the wheels

Clashed again-

Sorrow and Change

Made their first meeting

And there the tearful

Face emerged once more....

“The Great Sea Serpent has split my boat in three

And now all there is raging sea

Between Now, and Then, and When.

I've one foot on Now and one on Then

And the sea laps at my toes

With a voracious sucking sound

That drags Now and Then down

I wish I could follow Then

Into the sea below.

There I was born

There I'll go

And there is everything I know

There is half my heart.

But sinking ships must be jumped

And life remains on When.

I want someone to stop the boat

So I can get off

And sail away."

And so I vomited

All my pain

And purged my hate

And realised

What it all

Really is

In time for

The clash of the last

Two spokes

I was ever to

See.

They really accomplished

Everything for me.

Now I know all

My desires,

All my choices,

Everything at the bottom of

Civilisation

Will come to

Nothingness.

And the world

Is like the poem

Of him who

Drives the wheel

On which Belief is found.

So therefore,

I echo the golden rain

When I say...

Jesus be my reason,

The goal of every action.

Jesus be my solace,

My joy and my distraction.

Take me in your arms,

My Lord and master,

King of this island new.

For when all the world is stripped away,

Remaining, will be

You.

Reflection Statement

Through my independent investigation I have broadened my understanding of the purposes, nature, styles and techniques of poetry down through the ages and this had shaped what I have written and the way in which I express myself.

Through reading the writings of people such as Laurie Rozakis and Dr. Barry Spurr and Donald M. Murray and talking with various people including the poet Peter Skrzynecki, I have been able to develop a much more balanced view of the nature and purpose of poetry and this has impacted upon the intent of my piece. Before I began my research I was quite adamant that I wanted my poems to communicate a set message which I gave them and to have no other but I have learnt to relax my control over the reader and the text a little more and allow them to make their contribution to what the poem will become. I understood, at the beginning of the process, that the role of a poet is to materialize the abstract and describe the intangible but I saw this as incompatible with ambiguity and complexity. However, as I continued my independent investigation, I realized that, for a poem to clarify the profound in a way which touches people's hearts and challenges them it needs to be somewhat complex and ambiguous in order to give the reader plenty of food for thought.

Through my reading I became aware of an incredibly strong tradition in poetry of exploring life from unusual perspectives. From the work of W.H. Auden to W.B. Yeats poets all seem to be fascinated by recording the things most people do not see or appreciate. I was inspired by works such as William Blake's "The Clod And The Pebble" to examine the way people truly think and that they will not admit, even to themselves. And so I decided to follow in this tradition of exploring the world in unusual ways and take for my unusual subject, the underside of the tapestry of human civilization.

Essentially, this poem is a fulfillment of the fundamental and universal human longing to understand themselves and their kind. The 'Wheels Of The World' in my poem are a model or symbol for the strange and mysterious *mélange* of fate, change, God, other's choices, our feelings, our thoughts and circumstances that makes up our lives. They represent the idea that whilst all those conflicting elements and confusing ideas and feelings that we do not understand in ourselves let alone in others, do spring from a simple set of primal emotions deep inside us, those emotions are more complex and grandiose than anyone imagined. The first wheel symbolizes our souls and personalities. The second wheel stands for the forces with which our souls and personalities interact in our daily lives and then each of the miniature poems is an attempt to cut to the heart of what occurs when these emotions come into contact with these forces.

The concept of separate and parallel sets of poems is most obvious in William Blake's famous works "The Songs Of Innocence" and "The Songs Of Experience". I used this idea as a springboard from which to develop a multi-faceted approach with not just two sets of poems but six and I have also added an extra dimension to my major work by creating a second batch of 'sets' to create a grid-like effect. Each of the emotions has a colour assigned to it in order that a reader may find it easier to follow the structure of the poems and make links between the various poems. For example: all the poems about sorrow are in blue which is a well-known cultural symbol for sorrow.

Within my poem I have experimented with forms and genres and created my own original form and structure. "Ode To The Wheels Of The World" has features of many different types of poetry: it has some of features of the epic, including its length, the invocation at the beginning, and the narrative; it could be called an

allegory but it also has elements of the seventeenth century metaphysical conceits; some sections have a slow pace and are in free verse whilst others have rhyme schemes, and then, within the poem there are eighteen smaller poems which are partially separated, by colour, and alignment, from the whole and which have their own distinct patterns, tones and structures. Some of these miniature ‘sub-poems’ are even written to a particular style or in a certain genre: the fifth poem is in syllabic verse, the seventh poem is an epigraph; the eighth poem is a ballad, as is also, to some extent the thirteenth; the ninth is a haiku; the tenth is an Italian sonnet and the fifteenth is an English sonnet. I believe that this interweaving of genres adds originality and variance to my poem, which I feel would please a large portion of my readers and it also adds depth, texture and interest for those who wish to examine my poems further.

Through reading books such as “How To Interpret Poetry” by Laurie Rozakis, which explained the technical side of poetry, I was able to provide myself with a framework that not only became a source of techniques to experiment with but also a foundation upon which I could build a better understanding of the poets which I read. As I read I noted various techniques that poets had used and what I felt that their effect was on me and thus would be on my readers if I were to use them. For example: I was particularly struck by the rich and luscious imagery of Walt Whitman’s poetry including “To A Locomotive In Winter” and Herman Melville’s “ The Maldivic Shark” and my attempts to follow their lead are most obvious in my poem about sorrow and choice, and the slow, meditative pace of T.S. Eliot’s work influenced the rhythm of my main poem considerably. If I intended to write in a particular form I often read several examples of that form before beginning. I have explored the use of a myriad of techniques in my poetry from alliteration to macronic verse.

I would also pick up tones, rhythms, words, images and concepts, often unconsciously. By reading a variety of poets I was able to experience many different tones and thus increase my command over them and the tones of certain poets such as William Blake, T.S. Eliot and Peter Skrzynecki have had a profound impact on my own poetry. As far as images and concepts are concerned, I was able to find a wealth of inspiration in art and literature. There are allusions in my poetry and many of those illusions are to the Bible. The descriptions of the wheels contain a great deal of celestial imagery and like other poets, I have used phrases from it in my poems.

Over the course of the past year my major work has developed from an idea to explore the varied nature of the human experience to a finished piece of work that comes from inside my soul and carries the thoughts and feelings of one person to the world