

This poem is my tribute to the bull during a bullfight
in which he is so viciously abused.

He Stood Alone

They had gathered now as gathered for centuries and more
To pay tribute to an occasion as always before;
And watching the arena below as thousands take part;
Tension continually escalates from the very start.
The atmosphere is marked by the tolling bell's lonely drone;
And, he stood alone!

Maddening circles of countless screaming eyes now project
Toward the center of the circle from the upper deck;
And as conscious awareness quickly begins to drift,
The appearance of the intense fever present is swift.
The lust of the crowd is easily noted by their tone;
And, he stood alone!

As regal a player as one could expect for the cause
Now charges in and assumes command without further pause;
And the frenzied mood of the gathered crowd charges the air
With the ultimate thrill of the moment beyond compare.
His fate is sealed and his decisions no longer his own;
And, he stood alone!

The warrior's charge after determined charge prepares the stage;
He becomes bloodied but unbowed by the attacker's rage;
And I observed within the circle the fate being sealed,
As the full intent of the spectacle is now revealed.
His strength now depleted but his fate is still not bemoaned;
And, he stood alone!

On foot and mounted the cruel attacker's sharp incisions
Finished the bloody onslaught with merciless precision;
The enthusiasm of the thousands can't be denied;
I alone felt something very valuable die inside.
The end approached and he's the bravest but didn't belong;
And, he died alone.

Ode to the Fields
(Lament of the Migrant Worker)

From the first light of the early morning sun
Until the hard day's work is finally done,
I bend my weary back and flex my tired knees,
Causing my muscles to cramp and lungs to wheeze.

I swear, I'm going to leave behind this strife,
Move far away from here and start a new life.
But, alas, who am I really kidding now;
Changing my life is not an option somehow.

I could just as easily change, and I would,
My color and my very name, if I could.
Five more acres of ripe strawberries to pick;
Or, more to grasp, caress and twist, and be quick,

Rather than to pick; for by today's sunset,
There are flats to fill and quotas to be met.
There is no time to stand or straighten my back;
Either squat with back straight, or my newest knack,

Flex fully at the waist with knees locked in place;
Minimize the pain while maintaining the pace,
For the pace of harvest is life's bottom line.
Twelve members in this large family of mine,

And yet another little one on the way;
Should arrive, by all the usual signs, any day.
Two weeks the Mrs. has been out of the field;
Her absence hurts the family's daily yield.

We already have four non-working mouths to feed,
Three below age six, and Granny's old, indeed.
I refuse to work them before age of six;
Let them live life and play with their toys of sticks.

Soon enough they will take their place as a man,
Stand up, and be counted as a new field hand;
Spend their long working day in the burning sun;
No chance of relief until their life is done;

Watch their manly pride and ambition be sapped;
Live their whole life permanently handicapped;

Although, it's not of a physical nature,
But, just one of being forever dirt poor.

To work as hard as any man ever could
But, never reap the usual rewards they should;
To never have a home of your very own;
To view your future life with that fact well-known;

To tend the soil under a landlord's command;
Plant all the crops and perform the work by hand;
Then leave until further labor is needed;
Other fields to sow, or crops to be weeded.

No real roots nor control of your residence;
Be 'herded' as proof of your non-existence.
One day digging in the soil on your bent knees;
The next day pulling fruit from the thorny trees.

I've felt the burning sting of the local pests;
The caterpillar, wasp, fire ant and all the rest.
I'll live my pitiful life on this sweet earth
And leave no record of my death, or my birth.

Once I have lived my life, stagnated, and died;
Few will really know, and fewer will have cried.
All the lessons I have so painfully learned
Will have died within me, or at best, sojourned.

All my family and offspring after me,
Will have to relive this same painful decree.
After all I've suffered in my many years,
What will pain me the most, through my dying tears;
All our children forever will live estrange;
Harsh truth remains that nothing will change.

Through the Eyes of a Gold Double Demarka
(A Coin of Antiquity)

I was here long before recorded years began,
And I prefer to believe my actual life span
Dates from the separation of earth's crust and core;
Having been here a thousand millennia, or more.

I have throughout time shared a thousand lives on earth
And easily touched a thousand more since my birth.
I have been taken to the lips of many men,
Sometimes in loving, other times, lust is the end.

Innumerable bite marks now show upon me,
Not always in lust; but, in proof of quality.
I've attended social affairs throughout the land,
And, often, been carelessly passed from hand to hand.

I was tossed upon a gaming table of chance
And was sacrificed due to change of circumstance;
The cup's pebble mysteriously switched location;
That man should not list gambling as his vocation.

Just as I became that street gambler's possession,
I became another street person's obsession.
No sooner had I been safely secured by one
Than through a lad's deft fingers I was moving on.

Although this lad was a mere child of ten,
At home were mother and three hungry younger kin.
This young child proved my most noble master of all;
He traded me because of his family's call;

A loaf of bread and fruit and life-sustaining food
He then provided that day for his hungry brood.
So, a common thief performing a lowly crime
Has become my most noble master of all time.

I have been traded for love upon a back-street
And for a saddled steed in a hasty retreat.
I have navigated all the oceans on high
And once came face to face with the sweet bye and bye;

No hope for survival; the ship sinking from view.
My master rendered unconscious and sinking too.

A stranger quickly snatched me from my master's hand;
One week on floating debris before we sighted land.

I have been caressed and admired by Royalty;
And once used as a King's ransom and a Queen's fee.
I lined the tattered pockets of a beggar-man
And was the lure in an army's invasion plan.

As many times as he has held me in his hand
And gazed upon my face, I couldn't understand;
He still gambled and lost me to a lusting friend,
Because, he couldn't recall my name in the inn.

I have been used to pay soldiers during the war,
Have been lost by weaker men and taken afar
And offered to the Lord on the cross in his grief
In trying to bribe him to denounce his belief.

For a thousand years I crossed the burning sand
Of the hot deserts in every possible land,
But the most painful life of all now awaits me;
I realize I shall never again be free.

I now have been classified a priceless antique
And, therefore, became what any collector would seek.
No longer will I be so carelessly abused;
And, no more will I be so easily amused;

I'll sit in repose an eternity of time;
Missing the gypsy's ballet of rhythm and rhyme.
Upon some marbled mantle I will now recline
And see no more stories of history unwind.

Living Again

(A Tribute to Ella Wheeler Wilcox)

I chanced upon a long ago written poem
Envisioned within a gentle mind so solemn;
A fantasy flight guided by words so treasured
Now living again, bringing to life such pleasure.
I see the poet musing over a word choice
And bring her back to life so I can hear her voice.

Once within a proper chain of thought of my own
I see her penning her treasured words of renown;
She's at the ocean shore to track the setting sun,
And marvels at the fading orb till day is done;
She watches the tops of masts till they disappear
And knows each salt aboard and what they hold so dear.

She knows as well as any bard why they chose this fate;
Why the seamen look to the sea and so relate;
Why they kiss their loved ones so long and very true
As if each trip upon the churning sea of blue
May be the last time they will ever gaze at land,
Now that they've given their lives to Neptune's command.

With the masts dipping below the sea at days end,
The light of day and dark of night begins to blend;
Her tasks upon the shore has now been completed
And the saga across the sea has been deleted.
A sudden flash of light across the evening sky
Resets the stage for the next set of how and why.

She stops her slow sojourn across the sandy beach
To gaze into a billion stars beyond her reach;
She slowly contemplates the correct words she needs
To span the universe upon a cosmic steed
And know the infinite concepts of time and space
And to join with the comets in their nightly race.

I feel her trek her sojourn way across the sky
As her imagination will not be denied;
She searches throughout the frozen foreign domain
Via thoughts and chosen words that serves her the same;
Pinder has penned us through his words so beautiful
That all knows thinking is the best way to travel.

She thusly finds her way home upon earth's terrain
As the sky opens and sends an evening rain;
She feels the cooling droplets spread across her face;
Each imprints on her imagination a trace;
She's quick to leap aboard, or maybe join within,
A single drop of falling rain to rise again.

She will slowly ascend without an earthly care
Into the mist upon a wafting wisp of air
To float within the cumulus as in a dream,
To form with others a gushing watery stream,
And flood a valley or cascade down mountain sides
And form a force of nature not to be denied.

The falling rain yields to the canopy shelter
And like turning a page new images occur;
She towels away the last of the clinging moisture
And ponders upon the rising moonbeam's nature;
Untold hearts have melted under its magic spell
To live within the fantasy where lovers dwell.

She must be tired from her desultory journey;
I will set her and my imagination free;
I close her book and gently set it on a shelf;
Now, undisturbed she can again be my herself;
Although, I'm sure, even in her quiet repose,
She's still views the universe through her words of prose.

Reflections of Tears and Raindrops

I saw the rays from the stars high above
Reflecting within the eyes of my love,
And upon the petals of the flowers
That had bloomed within this garden of ours;

They reflect like multi-colored shadows
From the edges of the morning rainbows
As they spread vividly throughout the sky
Opening to allow the stars to cry

Within the saddened eyes of my one love
From the ubiquitous heavens above,
And upon the petals of the red rose
Within the garden where the flowers grow;

And I noted sparkling within the light
Separating in each eye day from night,
The collecting forms of several spheres
Coalescing there to form tiny tears;

And each painful tear drop that slowly fell
Caused the petals of the red rose to swell,
And thereupon they sparkled and glistened
While to their mystic rhythm I listened;

And I plucked a single glistening rose
From the garden where within flowers grow,
And I tenderly touched with this flower
At this uniquely sad opportune hour

The dampened cheek of my ultimate love,
And I found that this further served to prove
That, as both her tears and nature's rain-drops
Are from the harvest of similar crops,

Contained within her eyes was the message
Of the main plot of the scene being staged,
And I knew now as the flower touched her
That it could never bloom again either.