

*Times of the Wise Old Man*



*Stuart Eglin*





**BY THE SAME AUTHOR**

**POETRY**

Sharp Blue / Breath (1985)  
edge of water (1989)  
the kingfisher's testimonial (1992)  
Case Notes Poems (1995)  
foundlings (1995)  
Blue's Song of the Earth (1996)  
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**FICTION**

the butterfly principle (2009)

**NON FICTION**

Working with Archetypes, PhD Thesis (2004)  
The Coaching 30 (forthcoming)

# Times of the Wise Old Man

a collection of poems by

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blue*water* books





**bluewater books**

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## TIMES OF THE WISE OLD MAN



## Aslan speaks

I

Live through the grief  
– it will only properly ease if you really feel the feelings.  
It is OK to cry, OK to feel grief and loss,  
OK to mourn what it has cost.

The time will be right when the time is right  
to open up your feelings  
and find new things to celebrate.

Think of this – when you open yourself to people  
and are vulnerable,  
they respond.

II

Keep a calmness, keep a focus,  
and look for space to feel into yourself,  
find the inner passion that will lead you  
forward into the best space for you.

Tap into this inner resource and you will fly!  
Remember the kindness of those around you,  
and keep yourself open to the conversation and contact of others  
– even those you do not know.

There is a bright light  
shining  
just around the corner,  
you are nearly there.

## Construction

*So, who would this be then.  
It's a man – he is the person who helps me  
to form the compelling vision  
in each part of my life.*

*He guides me with my writing and creativity,  
giving me the confidence to share what I create.  
He is the driving force behind the passion.  
He is the force in the stories.*

*And his name is... is it David (after Sylvian),  
or Jon (after Hassell), or Brian (after Eno),  
or Robert (after Fripp), or Carl (after Jung),  
or Thomas (after Moore), or Seamus (after Heaney),*

*or is it possible to come up with a name  
that will combine all of these traits?  
Perhaps I should go for Brian or David  
as these are the 2 big influences – or Robert.*

*Oh, it's kind of difficult to decide with this.  
Random Name Generator from a website –  
and within the list there was Carl.  
So I think I should opt for this name...*

*Carl – the shaman,  
helper who aids,  
the Hero in seeking a guiding vision  
to help me on the journey.*

## Invocation

Blue sky trimmed with white clouds of emotion  
look where you can, there is more to be released

Now, opening out, taking a few simple exercises  
to let out the words, the birds are singing in a rhyme  
just like some strange tick

And the influences of my life, have brought me to a shape  
a unique determinant, fog rolling through a valley  
glitch and switch, each time a new time

Stretch the vowels, open every sound  
and watch as the images flow inward  
in invocation, recitation

The tug of an emotion, a boat on a shore  
the meaning I place now, the opening score  
wondering whether anything is sure (sic)

It takes a moment to think of another  
a second spent well, trying to understand  
is nothing for the time saved in doubt.

## **For the want of a structure**

When the swallows flew, the beat of a thousand wings  
each one peeling back a layer  
then bees sting, like every impact, every redact

For the want of a structure the meandering continues  
for the want of a picture all words must ease

Do you know why you are here?  
I do

The absence of form is the arrival of all  
even static become something for meaning  
every time we say goodbye, I wonder if it's the last.

## Stop staring at me

Stop that staring, stop starting stop  
It's as funny as a faux pas  
funny as standing in the sun and  
waiting for a bus to come

Ha, then  
there's a density that won't let you in  
I've seen this before and want to understand  
where these words flow from

It helps if there is something to push  
maybe a button, maybe a direction  
even when the line is dense  
somewhere else I haven't seen...

Whatever you mean your language  
being different, means nothing to me  
not even the inner reaches of the mind,  
can open the deep, bring out the soul.

I write what I write because I do  
and it means nothing to you  
so let the words come now  
and stop staring.

## There are no general rules for interpreting dreams

For you are with me now  
and I know this is a dream,  
we cannot undo a year as though none of it happened  
I can feel the pain of familiarity, of knowing that I have missed  
this comfort.

The specifics are as the very point  
at which my mind captures little details  
and throws them back at me,  
so that I go, "oh yes", and catch my breath  
an agony.

And then the time comes through  
that the dream must end  
like the opposite of anaesthetic  
I am struggling to stay in the dream  
hold down.

Not wanting the dream to fade,  
the immense hope that came with it  
the excitement of each feeling  
flowing through me and thawing my blood  
like spring.

But the morning is coming,  
relentless in its pull, dragging me up to the surface  
back to the air above, the daylight waking  
when the drowning in memories of dreams  
brought release.

## The Dream is a Dream

Last night I dreamt that I was flying  
ha, how stupid that is  
then I fell and my body dashed into debris and blood

Then the dream dissolved into a reality,  
no, still a dream,  
but I was swimming with turtles, fast and free

As if my body had never smashed, as if  
each moment of destruction hadn't happened  
and I could hold my breath for it all to go away.

For the dream is a dream, when the dream  
thinks of me, and I am the object  
of someone's desires

It was all done with strings,  
each pull meant I'd spin, first this way then that  
shocked by the animals as they passed me by

Each creature full of speech, things to say  
listening intently so as not to miss,  
for each phrase had hidden meaning

I just had to hold onto them in the dream  
until I could write them down, and look them up  
for the key to all gestures, all meanings my own.

The dream is a dream – waking moments cutting through.

## **Waking moments cutting through**

The diagonal point of it all,  
shapes as sharp as the night time moonlight.

We can run as fast as we like,  
it's all just a chase, a waste to escape.

For there, in our eyes are the waking moments  
cutting through to remind us of the pain.

Press your fingers on the blade of the knife again  
and really experience, sharpen the senses

The warm ooze of blood is gentle  
compared to the sting of the skin

Taking a diagonal turn, remember  
our mind the censor for the horrors, not working now.

## **The face in the whisky glass**

Remember the face, that smile  
the snow now reminds me of you

Another glass of whisky, caught on my breath  
sad strings of the music, looking out of the window

Reflections are drawing my dreams to an end  
it's all gone away, stay away, don't replay.

There'll be a sore head tomorrow, but now  
I can numb all that comes, the power of booze

Your face in the whisky glass, reflections  
from my thoughts to my eyes

Where are you now, I wonder  
lost in the midst of your own designs.



**FATHERS AND SONS**



## Fathers I

That we were one once  
Will be one again  
And have experienced the care of one too  
That is the remark, the remarkable

Death is the bitter blow  
That starts it off  
With a perverse twist  
Or so it goes...

Placed beneath the weight of a great family tree  
Looking for some sign that  
There's fame in the heritage or heroism  
But no, just a straightforward line

All the way back to the frozen north (cliché even there)  
No Mediterranean roots to speak of  
Unless the name means church and is French  
Then it's a different route

Fathers and forefathers and eight fathers  
Goes the mathematical joke  
Just a little poke  
Then a skim across the nations of influence

Until we just know  
How did it go now?  
Always wanting more than we had, is a disease  
Of religious intent.

09.03.10

## Fathers II

I know exactly what you are thinking  
I should do – because I have known you  
Since the day you were born

And yet, this is a complete mystery  
It's like you were abducted in the night  
And replaced with a stranger who looks the same

But has a totally different view of life,  
A new set of experiences  
And a wild view of your father

Help me out here, throw a line  
Let me go hook line and sinker  
For the body blow when it comes.

10.03.10

## Sons I

For I have brought shame  
On you father

I was meant to live happily ever after

But instead I bring a broken marriage  
To you for your thoughts from the place where you rest

I didn't break it, honestly though  
Although I played my part in the dance  
Of a relationship

And am left bereft (a cheap rhyme I know)  
Emotions just on the edge of the act  
At all times

And looking in a place of low esteem  
Where the water ripples wide as the stone falls

And the solitude of living is a turn of reality

The place you found after mum died  
When you realised that we enter and leave alone.

15.03.10

## Sons II

Oh, that I could do something for the three of you  
That would remove the pain  
The pain for me, the pain for you

When I am not there, I think of you  
I wonder what the absence means  
That is brought by your mother and I apart

And I make so little sense,  
Just drinking to forget, to numb  
And waiting for life to push me on

Out of control, and waiting for change  
Knowing that I rushed to get home for all the years  
To not miss a moment of the three of you

Now I miss days on end  
Watching the clock ticking  
Aware of my own mortality.

01.07.10

## THE KINGFISHER'S FINAL LEGEND





## kingfisher's turn

I remember that tree, struck by lightning before I climbed it  
The absolute shock of the bark, bitten by electricity  
And the beat of wing as it caught the night air along the river bank,  
Nocturnal bird seeking partner as the seasons fall

But those memories don't take away the emptiness of the truth  
That death will take us all, will shape us into insignificance  
And remind us that we are just one  
Micro-dot in the millions of years of existence

## I – the kingfisher flies

The kingfisher flies through my life, in short flits  
Steps through the air, like a juggler  
And wants to remember my name

But you can't remember my name, so why should he  
You have wiped me out of your life.  
Like a stain that needs to be cleansed

Birds in flight are the shift and spin that is often seen  
That is taken for a meaning, opened and made  
Put up before everything that we once knew

And darkness will cover my face, shroud it in despair  
Because that is what happens now, that is the force  
Of being captured and dragged through a passage, rites awaiting

I was spat out, a bad taste in the mouth  
Discarded, and left for dead  
The depths and darkness of winter

Now spring has come, and the leaves are growing fast  
But I can't find my own growth, my own rebirth  
There is nothing coming forth, nothing that would count

A recommendation, a star rating, anything that would set  
My mind to a positive arc, an energy spark  
A new path, away from the symbolic circular route I keep taking.

## II - trees, angular, bent

Trees, angular, bent and shaped by years of weathers, of seasons, of lesions  
Put upon the branches like an artist with a giant canvas, brush and knife  
Crepuscular species supine and recline within foliage -  
Spent now, repent now, relent now, we went then  
Left everything to chance, like a wild alcoholic, reckless and resplendent  
Shining in the moon-light, opened out to anything that strikes the soul  
You have left me parted, no longer whole, a hole in my spirit, seeking a god  
And finding only bitterness, despair, sadness and anger  
All wrapped up in a ten pound note, badgered and bewildered.

### III – there's a dance I know

There's a dance I know, that can create magic -  
If I showed you, you would wonder why  
You had not seen my inner beauty so vibrant before

But the secret must die with me,  
I have given my vow, left the message somehow  
Disavowed and empty of spirit, wondering.

Wonder – such an interesting word – a word  
Of excitement and chance, or of puzzle and stance  
No sureness, no certainty in anything, anymore

It was all there, like a clear map stretching into the future  
Then someone burnt the map, and the map IS the terrain  
The terrain is scorched, no routes left, everything confusion

I wish I could dance across the fields, find the paths again  
Open my heart and be awake  
Realise through vulnerability the place of repair

The dance of the spirit, the leap of my soul.

## IV – alone, not lonely

*“I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately,  
To front only the essential facts of life,  
And see if I could not learn what it had to teach,  
And not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.”*

- Henry David Thoreau, *Walden Pond*

Alone, not lonely, but on my own  
The difference is particular

Seeing within myself is a more terrible journey  
Than any outside path

Reaching down within, to find the shadow  
The depths of my vileness, my dark core

And staring into the eyes, glaring  
Facing up, confronting

Not for a fight, not to defeat  
But to see into, to understand

To accept, to reclaim  
Find a whole, a depth in the holes of my soul.

I see you now  
I have named you, to find you.

Lumera – in darkness there is light  
In light there are the depths of dark

Shine your blackness on me,  
Your absence of light

Dark scars are worthy, it is easier  
The journey through is shorter

Lumera speaks when I look into his eyes,  
He clears his throat, spits and then says

“Let go, stop trying to please  
Be who you are, chase your Daemon

“Look for the glimmer of your eyes  
See in the mirror, look into your soul

“You will see me if you look deep enough  
I will be there, waiting to let you free

“We can bring this together, we can  
Be sure that everything is within reach”

I don't know what to say,  
I open out my hands, I am kneeling on the floor

I am at the mercy, open to whatever.  
Eyes wet, fear in my heart, hands shaking

And then a calmness comes to me  
Like waters when the wind ceases

It is done.

## V - and the first time I opened

And the first time I opened the curtains to my soul  
I saw more than I could consider...  
So, placing hands on my heart, I felt the heat pass through

Gave a kindness that I don't normally reserve for myself  
Then looked across the estuary at the misty headland,  
Only wondering how the change in weather reflects my thoughts

A sharp light sharding its way through the air  
Was enough for me to understand why I was brought to this point  
And why I must pass through, not round or under

The dark night leaves scars and traces, places itself  
Where there is nothing that can get in  
But I will open again in time, when I have finished this passage.

## VI - this spectacular view again, bored with it

This spectacular view again, bored with it  
- Staying in this temporary home -  
What happens to the flow of life, with this big disruption?

And I see a jay, in the bush, unaware of me.  
Magnificent costume, my clothes drab, lesson learned then.  
The sun shines on the unjust and the cruel, like the victims too.

Winds serrate the landscape at 80 miles an hour for hours.  
How does this have such a gut pulling shape on my emotions?  
The eye of I wonders why.

Should I stare at a Rothko painting for days on end,  
Contemplate the suicide of a place of turmoil,  
To see into his three band state of mind?

Or should I walk on deserted beaches, deckchairs flapping  
Seagulls pitching and dive bombing, thoughts of  
Everything I lived in, everything I have lost?

Landscape then is all there is, the sense that  
Living is bigger than loving, that is the start point,  
Where survival holds all together, safe in harbour.

I will sail again, for new places, new people  
But not until I have let go of old journeys,  
And anniversaries that scrape the surfaces of my experiences clean.

**WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE**



## Antonyms and Synonyms

When all is said and done now,  
After so many months of highs and lows,  
Of just wondering whether there is a glimmer  
Of deeper hope and circumstance  
- finally it hits, like a freight train  
30 carriages and countless-ton load  
Hitting into my chest like I don't exist.  
It's the reality, it's over now  
There is no way back from this place of waiting.  
25 years and nothing to speak of,  
Complete destruction of all that we had,  
Only the emptiness of loss and grief now.  
This stark open and hollow telling  
Of the feelings I have inside.  
Having to learn to be with myself at last  
Whilst wishing I wasn't.

It's violence, the bloody emptiness  
The sense of no return – of needed to be  
A hapless adolescent again – antonym is adult  
Hopeless but for the sense that it must make some  
All of this chaos, confusion and turmoil  
Scattering my own ashes before death  
Wondering what's left now, that we have  
Pushed it all under water – but for an  
Accountant adding up the accrued years that are left in  
This old man – this spat on adult, or child  
Repealed like a redundant law.

## Stanzas that stand as Testament

Reading of sweet feelings that should be expressed  
Then looking inward and finding anger mixed with  
Two teaspoons of bitterness

Is it any wonder, really?  
Anything left then is bereft then  
Or dismantled, opened out like a set of tools

Each scalpel, or syringe is laid out  
Neatly in rows, tinges of blood – dried  
And remembering only that we are needed for more

I will split myself open before this is done,  
All raw and infected, seething at leaving  
Uncut, disrupt, erupt – explosion now, ending.















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