

# WITHOUT & WITHIN

POEMS BY

Gene (and)  
Strong

# I N D E X

Page 1....	Thoughts
2....	Flickering flame
3....	Lost errand
4....	Suffering
5....	Birds
6....	The ember-bearers
7....	The ugly mug
8....	The lily
9....	Youth
10....	Apron strings
11....	Lie
12....	Mind
13....	Hadn't it been
15....	Rush hour
16....	Twentieth century man
17....	Love
18....	National health
19....	Transcendental experience
20....	Two worlds
21....	The flame
22....	Sorrow
22....	Cry
23....	Glory
24....	Inner sight
25....	Our tomorrows
26....	Perversion
27....	Demonstration
28....	Envy
29....	The ordinary man
30....	Please

## THOUGHTS

Thoughts that thump inside my brain  
may you have sun, may you have rain,  
may you have wind to fly about.  
may you fly in, may you fly out!  
May you never be kept in bond,  
thoughts that would fly and rise beyond!  
Fly with the wind, and meet your kind,  
and then inspire mere mortal mind!

FLICKERING FLAME

Flickering flame, elusive light,  
by day and by night  
so alive.

Where to, glittering glow,  
do you ever go,  
fluttering?

Let me catch and hold  
your elusive gold  
for a while!

Kindle, flickering flame  
in my barren frame  
kindred light.

## LOST ERRAND

My thought was lost,  
my purpose had vanished,  
I stopped and looked back:  
Where had my thought been lost?  
Where was I robbed of my purpose  
while on my way to attain it?

Slowly I retraced my steps  
with senses tense and taut.  
Was it here, was it there the loss occurred?  
I lingered here and I lingered there,  
my soul smelled and sniffed for its offspring  
and found it not  
and grieved.

I resumed my search,  
my feet finding way  
like a horse on slack reins  
finds his way to the stable.

Suddenly the air was lit  
and my soul sparked with a thrill  
that sent a tingle of excitement  
through my limbs.  
It was here!  
My thought was still here,  
it had not blown away,  
it was waiting for me to come  
and bring it to its end.  
I turned again with my thought,  
my purpose locked inside to guide  
and I treasured it  
more than any other  
because it was lost but found again.

## S U F F E R I N G

Relentless day  
with never a night  
stretching endlessly into future  
would be cruel and crass.

Night without day  
would weigh the soul wearily.

Without striving,  
would we know delicious rest ?  
Would we know its savour ?

Without disgust  
would delight not lose its thrill ?

Would he who knew no anger  
know how to understand ?  
If heat had no cool to relieve it,  
or hunger and thirst had no fill,  
hope could not be known  
amongst us.  
We would die, drained of drive and daring.

As day is day  
because night is night,  
so joy cannot rejoice  
without suffering.

## B I R D S

How the birds  
do sing  
in the sky.  
They don't know why -  
They just sing.

They stretch the wing  
they preen the plume  
they don't presume  
to know a thing.

Yet they know  
it must be so.

They know the time  
they know the way  
across the land and ocean spray.  
The very laws that make man ponder  
are to them no source of wonder.  
They just know.

In joyous flight  
with fearless thrust  
they show delight  
and sing they must.

THE EMBER - BEARERS

No boundaries, barriers or powers bar or bind  
the mystical company of ember-bearers.  
They erase time and space,  
link earth with eternity.

As they roam vast realms of suffering,  
ecstasy, pain, tenderness,  
they fan a fire,  
the fire by which they live.

Though burned and charred and scarred for life  
they do not flee the fire.

Lit by its flame,  
powered by the heat of its heart,  
warmed and fed they walk the world  
with embers  
that kindle.



## THE UGLY MUG

There was a rather ugly mug  
that hung upon a kitchen hook;  
It felt so useful and so smug  
when we from it refreshment took;  
To it, all longings and demands for beauty  
were sublimated in a sense of duty.

Then once upon his nightly quest  
for a receptacle to hold  
his milk drink, came an honoured guest  
and thought: I want it hot, not cold.  
But as he poured, alas alack,  
the ugly mug sustained a crack!

No more its dogg'd delight in duty  
could satisfy its yen for beauty.

Our very honoured guest did look  
and missed the mug so smug and big  
on the now empty kitchen hook  
whene'r he took his nightly swig.  
He thought how well it had him fortified,  
and since he cracked it he felt mortified.

He sent some emissaries down  
to a nearby little town  
and there they found of rustic beauty  
a mug of more than simple duty:  
One which gloried just to be  
beautiful for all to see,  
oblivious whether it was sent  
to be a mug or an ornament.

## THE LILY

There grew a lily in my bosom;  
it had a fresh and a fragrant blossom,  
When I would hold it to caress  
it gave its fragrance less and less.

I loved the lily in my bosom  
but let my hands not spoil the blossom;  
it gave out its fragrant air  
when tended for its own sake there.

And then the lily in my bosom  
sprang out in a far fairer blossom;  
and my spirit now has known  
joy at what it does not own.

## Y O U T H

Youth are those with open heart  
to whom living is an art,  
Youth is ready to explore  
ways and means not tried before.  
There are those who age will measure  
by the means of years, and treasure  
creams and potions, pot and pills  
to get cured of ageing ills,  
not believing in the role  
still allotted to the soul  
which is an efficient gauge  
to a human being's age.  
Hail, octagenarian youths  
who perceive life's real truths!

## APRON STRINGS

They must leave  
and you must let them go,  
They must never know  
the ache that is  
and was since the beginning  
and will be until the last.

Awesome ache!  
Ache of ages,  
made of fruitless fear  
of stones that make them stumble  
and sorrows they must taste  
- and yet delight -  
dear God, the sheer delight!

L I E

The lie came  
so effortless  
and elegant.  
It seemed so bright,  
so right, just then.

Remorse came  
to rack  
and bruise  
and bend my back.

Burned with shame  
I turned in pain  
to light, to hope,  
- help me cope!

Torture ceased  
with words unsung.  
Now be released,  
speak truth, my tongue!

## M I N D

I woke to know I was walking  
as in wild wastes of nowhere  
in the barren landscapes of my mind  
without relief nor place to rest,  
nor peace, nor purpose for my plodding.

Driven dumbly on by dread  
to find escape from empty-ness,  
with contempt I counted tiny thoughts  
and small pursuits  
for naught.

But thought attracted thought.  
Pursuits proliferated,  
delight began to dawn,  
like delicate rays of the sun  
after long darkness.

H A D N ' T I T B E E N

Hadn't it been for you  
I would not have wanted to live,  
would have drugged myself numb.  
Walled within a prison of pain  
I raved.

I cried but not with tears -  
they dried up in my youth.  
I beat my head against the walls,  
voice hoarse from crying  
without the lubricant of tears.

I pushed people away -  
I could not bear their touch, their words  
or friendship.  
I had nothing to give  
and was ashamed.

I swore to contain my despair, my fire  
for I found none to understand  
no help at hand.  
Alone in the forest, in the field,  
in the mountain and in my mind,  
that lonely tundra  
I let the fire free -  
to soar up and up.  
It left me scarred, blackened, spent.

Did you see me ?  
Did you know ?  
Did you care ?  
Did you pity ?  
Was that why you came ?  
Or was it planned from the beginning of time -  
maybe both.

But what does it matter -  
you came .  
You parted the darkness with light,  
you made me step out of my plight.  
you made me face my deceit,  
my conceit,  
the iron control of my life and my soul.

You made me give you all my trust  
without question.

You made me walk before people  
without shield and protective pomp,  
just my ordinary vulnerable self.  
Walls, prison, darkness, void  
vanished and left no trace.

I was lifted into vibrant light, and life  
and danger, discipline and duty,  
reason and creating,  
and delight - such delight.  
You made me love you,  
son of God.



## R U S H   H O U R

It's a jolly, jolly sight,  
every morning and every night,  
to watch the people far and wide:  
With ever quicker step they stride  
first through the garden gate  
fearing that they are late  
breakfast hardly swallowed  
routine always followed,  
turning by the lamp post, then  
wave goodbye and run again  
for bus, or tube, or car, or train  
in still or storm, in sun or rain,  
and like toothpaste get squeezed out  
in queues on street or roundabout,  
in time to start, some hope, some pray  
an 8 - hour slogging working day,  
just to get processed one time more  
like paste through tubes to their front door.

T W E N T I E T H   C E N T U R Y   M A N

You're a quailing and a quitting man,  
a flailing and a flitting man,  
you're woefully weak,  
you crumple and you creak -  
you're a quitting man!

But you could stand up and speak  
you could search and you could seek  
and you'd find! You'd find! You'd find  
a power which can  
make you a man,  
a real man.

## LOVE

They felt made for each other,  
refreshed in love for each other,  
possessed each other in delight.  
Their love was their universe  
which they explored.

They lost of their surplus  
that intangible "other"  
which makes life an adventure,  
their vision dimmed.

Love lost lustre.  
Sex lacked challenge.  
They watched dreams and drives  
drown impotently.

They searched for a spark  
that lights the soul  
an aim that asks for all and more.

Wrenched, their wretched wills  
creaked and cranked the wheels  
of unused senses  
in challenge and surprise.

Love deepened  
bonds strengthened  
purpose grew  
fears foundered.  
Tired and happy,  
they felt fulfilled.

## NATIONAL HEALTH

We know a lot about the outer man  
and all his complex all-absorbing necessities.  
The welfare state devotes all that it can  
to his ills and his pills and oh, what a stress it is.

What about the inner man,  
the one with feeling, motive, plan  
and, dare we say it, soul -  
what is to be his role ?  
The man with courage and with vision,  
with compassion and decision,  
couldn't he  
be helped to be  
our national health  
and our basic wealth ?

TRANSCENDENTAL  
EXPERIENCE

I stand by a window and look at a tree  
and suddenly the tree is me  
and I am the tree.

And time stands still:

My sense, my will,  
my flesh and nerve  
no longer serve,  
my soul, fused with its goal  
and secret source,  
finds a force  
delectable and pure.

And I am sure  
beyond assuring  
of life enduring.

## TWO WORLDS

I was allowed some moments  
of vibrant clear reality,  
some seconds in eternity  
where past and future knit.  
And nothing mattered more  
than being part of it.

## T H E F L A M E

The flame flickers  
with the winds.  
Will it go out  
and leave darkness  
around it,  
deep darkness that stuns ?

Shielded too closely  
for fear it will falter  
the flame finds no air  
and flickers out  
all the same.

Flickering flame -  
through all ages  
there were always some  
who would rather die  
than see you flicker out  
and leave soul darkness  
amongst us.

S O R R O W

I feared sorrow's bitter brine,  
but as I drank, it turned to wine.

C R Y

Light a lamp !  
Give us vision !  
Strike a spark in sluggish souls,  
so we burn and bleed  
for greater goals !



## GLORY

There is a glory in everyone  
that longs to meet glory.  
It seeks glory to keep alive.  
No one can make it  
but glory is there in the stillness.  
It springs like a well  
in the pit of the stomach  
and rises to fill the rib cage.  
It goes to the head  
and makes you shout and sing.

## INNER SIGHT

There are some  
with inner sight  
who see a light  
and guard it,  
and carry it  
from those who went before  
to those who will come after.

## MASTERS

The world has changed:  
Man can master matter.  
But man cannot master man.  
God can.

OUR TOMORROWS

To waiting mothers  
someone could be born  
who'll live for others,

and share joys  
and lift burdens  
and carry sorrows

and show us how to live  
in our tomorrows.

## P E R V E R S I O N

You apologise, for what ?  
Is life's perspective not  
by trifling sorry-ness perverted ?  
Can these sidelong glances be converted  
from grim determination be right  
to a great compassion and insight ?

I wish you wouldn't grovel any more !  
Decide what you'll be living for.  
Fret only when concerned with trifling things  
and come and help my spirit, too, find wings !

## DEMONSTRATION

Spirit cannot be computed  
courage can't be constituted  
vision can't be legislated,  
but they can be demonstrated,  
and sought for by longing masses  
of British lads and lasses.

## THE WEATHER

When English men get together  
from London to Liverpool  
politely they talk of the weather,  
and carefully play it cool:  
You mustn't get excited, oh, no, no,  
you mustn't seem delighted, oh, not so,  
you daren't be amused  
before your'e introduced -  
that's the way they are!

## L E A D E R S H I P

We call for leaders, strong men  
to tell us what is right.  
What would prevent the wrong men  
from turning it to might ?

## E N V Y

Their faces were dull,  
Hers came alive  
with a smile  
at the pleasure of a prize -  
a basket.  
All could see her delight  
but none could feel it,  
nor did they want to.  
They only wanted  
the basket.

## THE ORDINARY MAN

In this age of revolution  
it's the ordinary man  
who, in search for a solution  
has discovered that he can  
damn prevailing politics  
shatter ancient bailiwicks  
call his leaders lunatics  
oust them, and their old side-kicks  
and pursue his own mean tricks  
never minding whom he kicks  
and go scot-free and feel great  
having purged himself of hate.

He has found that he can rock the boat -  
but can he steer it through a storm afloat ?  
To do that he must obey  
what the skipper has to say.

P L E A S E

When I grow old -  
well, I'm quite old now!  
When I grow really old I mean -  
that is if I do; you never know these things!  
So if I grow really old, my child -  
but you are my child no more,  
though you came of me  
and were me for most of a year  
and still feel mine.  
Now with a child of your own  
you are one flesh with your man  
as I am with mine.

Well then; if I grow really old  
in heart and mind and limb,  
one thing I ask of you:  
promise,  
promise not to pamper or protect!  
I have suffered, I have loved,  
I have battled, I have laughed,  
I have drunk of delights  
that have poured from the source of life  
into the parched, tortured, twisted tangled mass  
that was my inner self  
and cried out to die.

This me was cradled, fed and loved to life  
as with parents' love and patience  
but greater.

Life bubbled where dryness was,  
like a source that springs from the depths  
while we watch in wonder.

It trickled, poured  
and made a stream  
and the stream a river.  
The river made pools and lakes  
and made way again towards the sea -  
source and sea the same.

There were boulders in the river  
rocks and logs to dam the flow,  
sticks and stones.  
The force of flow made whirls and waves  
with froth and foam  
that rise in cascades to be hurled  
back into the river.



There are those who try  
to roll rocks away,  
who think them wrong,  
preventing progress.

Those rugged rocks  
that split dashing waters into sparkles,  
make rainbows in the sun,  
make salmon leap,  
make laughter in the soul,  
let them stand for ever!

Never try to smooth the flow  
or still the stream!  
Let me feel the pebbles grate on the river bed!  
Let me dash my spirit against those timeless rocks!  
Let me, though weak maybe of limb and mind  
run my course.  
My tears as I dash against rocks  
are the drops that fly from the waves  
and catch the light of the sun.  
My groans as I grate on the gravel  
are the roars of the river - run.

Fool is one who tries to scoop  
the river up with hands  
to stagnate in putrid pools:  
burdened he darts to and fro  
to no avail.

Let the river run its course  
in tumult towards goal and source  
and merge with the majesty  
of the waiting sea!



PRINTED BY:- CLARION COMPUTER SERVICES LTD, RAGLAN HOUSE,, MIDDLE STREET, TAUNTON, SOMERSET.

TEL. TAUNTON 5101

I N D E X

	Page
Thoughts	1
Thinking things	2
Lost strand	3
Suffering	4
Harsh	5
The amber-beaters	6
The jelly mug	7
The jilly	8
Youth	9
Agon springs	10
Life	11
Mind	12
Hadn't it been	13
Wash hour	14
Twentieth century man	15
Love	17
National health	18
Transcendental experience	19
Two worlds	20
The flame	21
Sorrow	22
City	23
Glory	24
Inner sight	25
Our tomorrow	26
Perversion	27
Demons	28
Envy	29
The ordinary man	30
Please	31