



# Dervish Days

FREE EPUB EDITION

[www.worldbookday.com](http://www.worldbookday.com)

WORLD  
**BOOK  
DAY**

1 MARCH 2012

POEMS BY

Sean Woodward



## *Also by Sean Woodward*

Also by Sean Woodward

### POETRY

*Deja-Vu: Selected Poems 1982-1987*

*Verbal Narcotics*

*Living Poets (editor)*

*Winds of Karma (spoken word)*

### SHORT STORIES from THE CABAL SERIES

*Lord of Misrule*

*A Christmas in Brompton*

*Christmas Angels*

*House of the Witch*

### NOVELS

*The Crystal Parliament*

*Death Codex*

### MUSIC as GOTHICK

*Retrospecktive*

*Zodios*

*NU-HAD-RA: Visions Ov Liber Legis*

*Convokation Ov Ra-Hoor-Khuit*

*Evokation Ov Hadit*

*Invokation Ov Nuit*

*Royal Alchemy*

*Earthworx*

*Abyss Walker*

Visit [seanwoodward.com](http://seanwoodward.com) for the latest updates on new works and giveaways and join him on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/seanwoodward).

Visit [gothick.co.uk](http://gothick.co.uk), for the latest Gothick updates and free albums.

## *Copyright*

First published in 2006

This edition 2012

by [Dragonheart Press](#)

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced without written consent from the author.

© Sean Woodward, 2006, 2012

Sean Woodward is hereby identified as the author of this work in accordance with Section 77 of the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act 1988

DERVISH DAYS, poems by Sean Woodward

ISBN 1-871058-48-1

## ***Dedication***

For my wife Angela.

## ***What Readers are Saying***

“An unmistakable authority” – Glyn Hughes, DH Lawrence Festival Poet in Residence

“Poet of the global village” – Ashley Franklin, Derbyshire Today

“Artist, poet, storyteller and musician Sean Woodward has a wealth of experience exploring the dark and mysterious aspects of being, and translating them into creative media that speak to the inner core of the receiver” – Ellen Simpson, Hierophant Nox

## *Contents*

### CONTENTS

Love Gangsta  
Ricochet  
Left Hand Path  
Scarlet Queen  
Return Again  
Forgotten War  
Riding With Demons  
Sinatra  
Skywatch Stalkers  
En Paris  
The Spell of Picasso  
Pompidou Skylines  
Notre Dame  
Keepers of the Way  
Like a Wind  
She Comes To Me  
Her Sleeping Breaths  
Amongst the White Shadows  
Street Scene  
Not Ever Known  
After All  
In the Smallest Places  
Fredericksburg  
Baby Next To Me  
City Of Dolphins  
King of Youlgreave  
Beneath the Christmas Tree  
Servants of Impermanence  
Ioannes  
Whistle  
Billion Dollar Skin  
Burn the Bridges

The Unwired Kami  
Demon's Ditch  
Crow Child  
Magick Carpet Ride  
Like a Sleeping Man  
Two Kahlo's  
The Third Act  
Impossibilities  
COLOPHON



## ***Love Gangsta***

### LOVE GANGSTA

Love gangsta  
You burn me up  
With your joking looks  
And loose confidence.

When you move  
In your pinstripe dance  
Everything you've got  
Is dancing away

And nobody masters the anxiety  
To step close to the conquest  
And say  
It wasn't the woman choosing

It wasn't the man losing

In those seconds of play  
When we first met  
I see every way

In every breath

You gave yourself to me.

## *Ricochet*

### RICOCHET

Making circling movements  
Then quick to dart away  
Like the silver ricochet

From an AK47

I'm awoken  
In this fly's life.

A moment is just a token  
Of every instant before  
Everything else is larger than life

Refracted, returning  
Until it's like everything else.

And I'm a bullet  
In the mouth of the wind

A smouldering vengeance  
Singing of oblivion

Just when you thought  
You could walk away

Just when you thought  
There was nothing more to say

Just then  
I'm the ricochet

A waiting vengeance  
That has found its day.

## *Left Hand Path*

### LEFT HAND PATH

In my hand, the flickering  
Blade of a Kris,  
Volcano-hearted spirit  
Dancing in the dawn mist.

Frozen in the stone-square cone  
Of a bas-relieved Jain temple  
The steady glow of devotion  
Bronzes the features of Durgha.

I have known  
The grassy stairway to the stars,  
Reaching from the empty river's  
Twist, terracing the horizons  
With the wishes  
Of a thousand bent backs.

Here I stand, between  
The right and left hand path,  
In the fiery core of my being  
Silenced by the spiral reckoning,  
Tutored by the jungle's myriad voices.

Without choices,  
Without divisions,  
Awake to the splendour of simplicity  
All experience flattened  
To the soft sound of jankalung strokes

And the majesty  
Of a puppet-king's mastery.

Stones broken by water,  
Day and night as one,  
You and me, dagger and scabbard

Bleeding children of the sun.

## *Scarlet Queen*

### SCARLET QUEEN

If I paint your naked body  
Place the feint of a red mask  
Upon your face  
Remember that I am the King  
That all who sing the song  
Of scarlet ochre  
Belong to me  
Long for me.

If I make saints of my enemies  
Take the scented lands  
Into my kingdom  
Remember that I am the one  
Chosen since before time  
And all who cross the line  
Of scarlet ochre  
Are mine  
Have no hope of secrets left to find.

If I take your naked body  
Shake a pattern of cobalt stars  
Across your breasts  
Remember that I am the Summer King  
That all who call me  
In the scarlet ochre of the dark moon  
Stand tall before me  
in a room of burning incense  
And hastily chalked remnants of protection  
Are made holy in their purpose.

If I paint your naked body  
For all of tainted time  
With the signs of the crossroads  
Remember that I am the King  
That I see no human beauty  
Only masks of misery and blood.  
And when you have understood that  
Then call my name  
Wrap yourself in black flame

And when you have sisterhood,  
Sat long with the moon  
Then call my name  
Wrap yourself in the argent bloom  
Ride the silver broom

Take the white blood of my veins

My Scarlet Queen, My Babalon

And I'll paint your naked body  
In a thousand names of chameleon change  
And I'll take your naked body  
At one with the wandering beast  
To the kingdom that has no name

Where the Winter King and the Scarlet Queen  
Forever reign.

## *Return Again*

### RETURN AGAIN

Have you ever woken  
From a dream  
You knew so real

That you questioned  
The days in which you walk,  
The sudden

Inability to fly ?

Have you ever wanted  
The slender years of delight  
To appear just one more time

When you climb into the night ?

If you think very perfectly,  
Her name will return again  
And all that once was

Will burn within  
The cloth of your veins.

And if you listen very carefully,  
To the pictures in your head  
All will return again  
As though you never fled.

And when dusk and bats  
And the white dust of the dead  
Are with you once again

Speak her name very softly now  
And stars will chain into her breasts  
Oceans rise between her legs

Cobwebs make her Miyaki dress,  
And all that once was  
Will return again.

## *Forgotten War*

### FORGOTTEN WAR

Ngawang Sangdrol;  
Your eyes find me

In the black heat intensity  
Of a Cafe Nero Americana,

Safe in my pathetic  
Western street life.

As the iron bars dance  
Their pain through the dark  
Of Drapchi prison

I am blinded by the sparks  
Of all these rushing years  
Have forgotten to listen

To Tibet's ocean of tears.

We, who have no need to scream,  
Should scream

Tear down the Chinese silence,  
Walk not in dreams  
Of fabled Shangri-La

But in prostration  
Down streets  
Of a free Tibetan nation.

Ngawang Sangdrol  
Your eyes find me

Waking once more  
To this terrible barbarism,  
This forgotten war.

## *Riding With Demons*

### RIDING WITH DEMONS

Having trafficked with demons,  
Intelligences, ghouls,  
And the sullen constructs

Of Alchemists, your punctuated attempts  
To appear aloof, unaffected,  
In control of every situation

Have no meaning

Are like the screaming never heard,  
Atrocities lying undisturbed  
In the Sudan,

In Bosnia, Chechnya and  
The whole damned world.  
Every man is the same

Blameless and free,  
Riding with demons,  
Cutting down the spirit's tree

Blind as only young souls can be  
To the enormity of their actions  
To the creaking

Dying, drowning body after body  
Turning on the Wheel  
Feeling this last moment

For the eternity of the Bardo.

Having trafficked with demons,  
I know  
How they love so to sew themselves

Into the skin of a man,  
Into the skin of a woman,  
Torn and scratched and withering

Never quite hiding,  
Blind to all learning,  
Burnt with all that riding

Turning on the Wheel.





## ***Sinatra***

SINATRA

Vegas turns to a black-tie only event,  
As the lights go out  
In respect  
Of Ol' Blue Eyes.

In the desert,  
The fast frame image  
Of a limousine

With Bono under your skin

Is ripping up the sky.

I'm led  
Through a montage of phrases  
Perfectly timed, lines  
Made his

A whole world of sadness,  
From Havanna to Manhattan  
Sepia-toned

In his own spotlight.

Sinatra has passed  
This night by  
But the voice

Will not  
Ever die.

## *Skywatch Stalkers*

### SKYWATCH STALKERS

Burning off the rain,  
A rampant blacksmith's rod  
Sparkles upon the pavements of Warminster.

September 1968 changed Cradle Hill  
From the land of walkers  
And early morning dogs -

To the skywatch stalkers  
Searching the fog of closing-time myth  
Searching for the lost galactic silversmith.

Ley Lines twist and unravel  
Wish away the doorways between,  
Expand safe the black holes

Powering the old engines of spaceship travel.

Crop Circles blister up from the soil,  
Displaying their tell-tale signs  
Of 25th Century oil conglomerates

Rewinding time,  
Leaving behind their advertisements  
On this premium rate, historic Earth space.

And the skywatch stalkers  
Gazing beyond the reach  
Of the distant galaxy's rim

Miss the significance  
Of a silver Cola-Benz mascot

Escape the dance of irony  
That stopped a second

For all to see  
Above the trees  
Of Cradle Hill.

## *En Paris*

### EN PARIS

Beneath the bridge of the Metro  
We are held from the curve of space  
Following a line  
Through the flea market  
Of gilded period desks, old postcards,  
Signs and portents.

Books are left to their language,  
Old printing blocks ink large  
The letters of our worlds,  
Scattered across a desktop  
A cipher of sorts,  
Lost to us.

Further afield, another sweeping arch  
Of latticed steel, squares the sky,  
Sweeps upwards, in a rush  
Eiffel's frenzy  
Following us across the city.

Underground, the pretty people  
Ignore the lady with the harp,  
Her statue-clothes of white  
Animated as a thumb strikes  
The rhythm, and fingers  
Pluck ancient arpeggios  
From between the posters.

In Paris, we dream,  
The dream of the ladies of Montparnasse,  
The gold latticed dream of angels  
Atop every pillar, lurking  
On every dome's corner.

In Paris we become the dream  
Walking between old wooden doorways  
Caught in the place  
Where the soul stays forever

Taught the truth that is Love's daughter.

## *The Spell of Picasso*

### THE SPELL OF PICASSO

In muted terracotta  
Morphic forms of softness  
Embrace.

Gone are the metal traces  
Planar edges  
Breaks of rust.

In a lakeside wood  
The bearded baboon-hunter  
Profiles the land.

A guitar stands whole again  
The spell of Braque is broken  
Françoise's laugh

Disrupts  
Picasso's gaze  
Enough

To set ablaze  
The colours of dust  
To shred the fabrics

Of his illusion.

But for us, walking  
In the perfect light  
Of his Musée

There is no escape  
We can only watch  
As his muse

Takes another shape

And we lose ourselves  
Slowly ever deeper  
In the spell of Picasso.

## *Pompidou Skylines*

### POMPIDOU SKYLINES

Cats, Cats, Cats  
On the rooftops of Paris,  
Larger than life

Creeping into the lives  
Of contemporary Monmatre painters,  
Into Pompidou skylines.

Black scratching lines of Picasso,  
Purples blocked together  
No attempt to match their hue

Or fill the spaces between.

Braque's little 3D instrument heads  
Jump into the canvas  
Shout "we're not dead yet"

And Kadinsky's thin black outline  
Holds in the colours  
Of dancing amoeba creations,  
Square showers of abstraction

Raining down on Pompidou's infinity pools.

A mess of Matta's cartoon technical figures  
Are blown into part life  
By red depth and shaded light

By her breath and eternal lover's night

Burnt into my mind  
On a stretched out, landscape canvas  
Whose vastness shines and shines

Her republic of heaven open to me.

To the sounds of Picabia's turning machinery  
Flattening colours and breaking time,  
I yearn to sit in the corners

Fall down the curves  
Unpick the jigsaw designs  
Watch the pieces of his His thought unwind.

And Ernst's horns transmute sunlight  
Into blocks of led,  
Pierce the pure cobalt horizon

With dread longing  
And I lie here longing  
For Fifi in my bed.

## *Notre Dame*

### NOTRE DAME

Shadowed stone vaults into obscurity  
Arches itself amidst a spangled sky  
Smothers the sound of free thought  
No matter how hard we try.

I weave amidst the pilgrims  
Settle in a side chapel in thought  
Renounce all the evil I have brought here  
Wishing all of memory to disappear

Perhaps the Lady of the Heavens,  
Her ancient name upon my lips  
Will rip open my long dark heart  
Let me start once more

Upon this war with compassion.

These are no new lessons  
Nothing a Crusader's Blessing can erase,  
Through the haze of Roman deities,  
Through the days of piety

To stand once more  
In the desert's forge  
My own dark heart  
Left on the shore of the Seine

My own dark self  
Never again the same.



## *Keepers of the Way*

### KEEPERS OF THE WAY

Across the blood red sands  
We are carrying  
The secret of St Anthony.

From his distant lands  
We return disfigured,  
Legs refashioned

To defy gravity.

We let him spy us, that man Dali,  
The obelisks of Giza upon us.

We let him take one look, than man  
At our elephantine space caravan.

Across the nights  
In search of holy water  
We walked

We sought only to whisper  
The secret thoughts  
No power will utter

Until the still of winter.

We carry the liquid elixir  
Transformation is our name  
No man follows us

Save him that came.

We travel to the plains  
Of the stars  
Reach out

Our trunks and spill galaxies.

We are the keepers of the way  
Entrusted by Thoth  
To make the journey

Across the crimson sands  
Of your memory.

## *Like a Wind*

### LIKE A WIND

They tell me love is like a wind  
That bends the palms  
Makes whole plantations  
Something, sometimes never seen.

They tell me love is like a ghost  
Seen by some, but to most  
Just a fairytale, a dream  
Or a half-remembered trail

Of happiness.

Tonight, as my love lies in the little death  
Of our blessed union,  
I travel across beach and tree again,  
Moving unseen and hidden.

They tell me love is like a heartbeat's  
Perfect pattern, reaching through blood and bone  
To bring harmony, life and peace  
To all who would call it home.

And I, who have known this life  
Came to teach,  
Know only to each  
Should find their own.

For in this world without relent,  
Each moment of love,  
is the soft-gloved touch of the wind

Saying through your soul (swaying through ?)  
Of everything and the only thing

That makes us whole.

## *She Comes To Me*

SHE COMES TO ME

She comes to me  
Beneath the leaves and dappled cobbles  
Between the rusty broken crosses

She comes to me  
When I am lost without possibilities  
Can see only failure

She comes to remind me  
I have only to ignore the darkness  
Only to call her name.

She sets me free  
From this Caribbean island prison  
Chained to these galleons

Of the sea.

She comes to give me  
The secret treasure of her skin  
The ocean within

This pirate's telescope gaze.

She comes to make me  
Different than I would be  
At peace

With this path I tread.

She comes to me  
Kuan Yin, Mary, Negro Madonna  
She comes to me

When no hope can be.

## *Her Sleeping Breaths*

### HER SLEEPING BREATHS

I see myself asking  
what became of the old man  
sitting between bookshelves  
Whispering  
Like the wind upon the River Cam,  
"you have things to remember,  
places to travel again,  
jobs no boy's hands can do."

And so he waited  
And I grew slowly into his age,  
Girded with constellations,  
Circled with azure astrolabes,  
Rusted with retrograde planets,  
Playing with the prayers  
And dextrous mudra poses  
Of saffron sages.

One day he threw open a door  
To a library of more  
Where my eternal muse lay  
Teasing upon the floor.

Its only in her sleeping breaths  
That you will pause and peek  
Once more upon the test

Of how blessed this life you've led  
(he whispered beneath his breath,  
Like mist upon the Cam  
When a punt has sled  
Silent upon the waters wan.)

And yes, She of the crescent moon  
and golden tressed pentagram  
Ran the length of Trinity Street,  
Badger scarf and Starbucks coffee

Late again  
For the teachings of this lesson.

And I whisper  
Between the pages of never printed poems  
And I whisper again  
As ancient led

Between the panes of ever tinted saints

Of the secrets I set aside  
Like a prayer upon the tide

Don't let me ever  
Leave her sleeping side.

For her sleeping breaths  
I have crossed these varied deaths  
Of age and fear and dread introspection.

For her sleeping breaths  
Are the dew drenched caress  
And I,

I am the old man River Cam.

For her sleeping breaths  
Dress the world in a new light

And I whisper again  
Like a rippling prayer upon the tide

Don't let me ever  
Escape her sleeping sighs.

## *Amongst the White Shadows*

### AMONGST THE WHITE SHADOWS

On the steps of Sacre Coeur  
The pax fingered shadow of Christ  
Slips past the quiet funicular journeyers

Touches the soot wrapped roofs  
Then pauses for two centuries  
Counting to the millennium.

A man wraps his face in white  
His body likewise, stands upon a block  
And ghosts himself into the past.

A woman, steps from solitude  
For a moment she moves  
Then haunts her way back.

A child that remembers to give thanks  
For a nation's deliverance  
Is born this day in France.

And we breathe the turpentine air  
Of artists, the scissor-deft silhouette  
Of character

Forget  
We are but travellers  
In the empire of death

Tomorrow's ghosts.

Should we not practice  
Our monastic mime of stasis  
Embrace the ritual

Of marble, pale and cold?

Then witness  
On the steps of Sacre Coeur  
The advance of the Third Reich ?

Wear the fear

Of what might have been  
Remember the plight  
Of your people's kin

Abroad  
Beneath the ghetto spire bell  
Amongst the white shadows

In this gallows night  
In this  
Our bright flesh's

Empire of death.

## ***Street Scene***

### STREET SCENE

Red parasol  
Black and white waiter  
Bottles of wine

On their back, bare their labels

Try to trap the shine of the sun  
Upon their necks,  
Tired of their green complexions.

In the heights, a gargoyle with goatee  
Is pensive at the prospect  
Of another century

Of his sides trapped in a parapet.

The girl drinks her coffee  
Has caught me in her gaze  
And danced already

The path to my bed.

Sirens arch their backs  
Upon the sides of lampposts,  
Carry the emerald lights

From the skeleton depths of faerie.

And she waits for me  
My green-eyed lady of the cafe  
In this twilight scene

Of a street  
By the whispering Seine.



## *Not Ever Known*

### NOT EVER KNOWN

I have never known  
How to stitch the wound  
Of your absence.

Never grown a beanstalk  
That could wind  
As well as we could

Spiral maze our touch.

I have never wanted to know  
This time of separation  
Cannot sit by

As we grow to hate  
To forget  
Why we are here.

I have never  
Dared stay in this mind  
Of emptiness

Not ever to complete  
This teaching of nirvana

Not ever to want  
The numbness

Never yet  
In a hundred thousand lifetimes  
Wanted

To be apart.

## *After All*

AFTER ALL

The aching past  
Lapses into mind  
All these years

After first I found you.

As sure as Guinevere  
You were promised to another,  
And now, in fulfilment

Of that destiny

You appear at his side.

I run into the maze of ways  
I have made to hide  
The pain

All these years.

I run into the wet leaves  
After storm rains  
Covering my face

Hiding tears I cannot shed  
For fear of opening  
Those dead wounds.

Surely I should be happy,  
For you and for me  
But this teenage attachment

Is apt to make a misery  
Of a grown man  
Running into you again

After all these years.

## *In the Smallest Places*

### IN THE SMALLEST PLACES

She's there,  
In the smallest place you know  
Hiding between the moments

As if time and space and circumstance  
Were but trees in the forest  
Through which she walked.

She's there,  
When you ask the grey haired pony tailed man  
For directions,

See the scooter-mounted samurai of Kyoto  
Follow you to every junction,  
Shouting "Ganbatte ne!"

As he bids you good luck.

She's there  
In the smallest places

Kwannon,  
Kuan Yin, Mary, Negro Madonna

She's there  
And I offer my prayer, small upon the air

Namo Kuan Yin pu-sa.

## *Fredericksburg*

### FREDERICKSBURG

Night comes wet to Virginia,  
The alchemist trees adept  
At stealing colour

From the shiny depths  
Of every drop.

Shivering in the Halloween wind  
They wrap a cloak of golden leaves  
Around their soaking shoulders

And dream of soldiers  
In the trap of the Rappahanock,  
Sliding between worlds

Called by the cannon wheels  
To the land of night  
Called by the riflemen

To the sleep without light.

I hear their voices  
Echoes huddled on the horizon  
Crouched beneath the trees

Hidden now by Interstate  
By Re-Election campaign pleas  
Conversing with the Generals of the Fall

Those forests of ancient strategy  
Standing now so proud and tall.

Night comes wet to Virginia  
Carrying with it  
All these moments

That linger.

## ***Baby Next To Me***

### BABY NEXT TO ME

I don't wanna be in Denver,  
I don't wanna be in Tennessee,  
I just wanna remember  
My baby next to me.

I don't wanna touch the heavens,  
I don't wanna dive the seas,  
I just wanna be somewhere,  
Where my baby's next to me.

Don't wanna have diamonds,  
Don't wanna move gold,  
Just wanna see the smile  
Of my baby when she's old.

You keep your five year plans,  
Your negotiated settlement fees,  
I just wanna be with my baby,  
Wanna walk in the autumn trees.

No need for dollar handshakes,  
No need for three-way deals,  
Just want my baby here  
To show me what is real.

No time for wasted journeys,  
No time for all this jazz-slide,  
Gonna shake up this tired system  
Get to my baby's side.

I don't wanna be in the Capitol,  
Don't need no Venice Beach,  
Just my baby here with me,  
Not so far outta reach,

No need for some old bluesman  
To tell me how I'm feelin',  
Cause tonight without you baby

My whole world - it's reeling.

## *City Of Dolphins*

### CITY OF DOLPHINS

Dusk rides the London Eye,  
Drops into the Thames,  
Rises upon the Embankment

Wearing the night black body  
Of a crouching Sphinx.

In secret illumination  
The obelisk beacon is lit  
Black light pouring its hieroglyphs

Unseen across the rippling waters.

Fallen leaves,  
A desert floor of golden heat  
Reaches out

Beneath the feet  
Of my Nile Queen

Sleep-walking between  
That life and this.

In her kiss I would hear  
All my empires crumble

In her embrace.  
The world so near

Disappears forever.

Dusk whispers  
And in the City of Dolphins,  
They slip from river lanterns

They call to the camels,  
Sit no more with bench and stone  
The desert is calling us

Calling us home.

And I, I know nothing of this life,  
Not its shape, not its lie, not its name

I know only

It is for her that I came

To the City of Dolphins  
On the edge  
Of the River Thames.

## ***King of Youlgreave***

### KING OF YOULGREAVE

One by one  
The rivers are slowed  
The roads

Are blocked.

In the silence  
Of a lost, last moment  
Bells

Weave the darkness  
With light

I am the King of Youlgreave  
All will sleep despite themselves

For I am the King of Youlgreave  
Find your peace tonight.

Day by day  
The ways we once knew  
Are changed

Are made new.

This is the time  
That few will stop to see  
These are the days

Of walking round  
Round and round

The forgetting tree.

These are the ways of royalty

Of the King



## ***Beneath the Christmas Tree***

### BENEATH THE CHRISTMAS TREE

Ageing affects everyone else,  
Turns that wiry school kid  
Into a bloated prophet.

Something is slowing emotion,  
As if the sea of years  
Had worn off the sparkle

Of our glass shells.

Ahead of me I toy  
With satisfied medium age  
Without realising

I've slipped into the skin  
Of someone I feared might live within

That I'm too busy judging  
Every moment  
To be in it.

Only now, when I fall back  
Into the orchard summers  
Of childhood

Do I feel the weight  
Of strange paths I have taken

Unwrapping broken ornaments  
For a christmas tree  
I'm overtaken

By their age, their shiny  
Hollow promises

Only now, do I see the branches  
Ripped from the earth,  
Feel the hurt

Of what has passed me by.

## ***Servants of Impermanence***

### SERVANTS OF IMPERMENANCE

Why do you need  
To be a speed perfect sacrificer ?

Feeding the myths of success with your latest greed  
For the best, most expensive

Consumer-durable, bleeding-edge antique.

Its so easy  
To create a context of conscience-free reasoning

As you book the next nanny,  
Next chic babysitter

Next surrogate family history.

For here, I see  
You are not inconvenienced  
By dead people  
Sick people,  
Not-rich people  
Who might flick the switch  
Teach you

All about impermanence

How short your chances of reckless abandon.

Why do you need  
To pretend there's such a thing  
As "quality time"  
"no need of discipline"  
"no need for mothers"

And then you wonder  
All the time

If the crime bred of isolation  
Of a nation made servants

To every salesman's line.

## *Ioannes*

### IOANNES

Running across St Peter's Square  
In the depths of obelisk shadow free night  
I see a single light

In a single window  
Now shuttered tight

In anticipation

of conclave's white smoke.

In surprise my single tear  
Screams from a bleary third eye  
Tries to shout at the injustice of life

That folds itself away  
White Visage Veiled  
Into the hidden light of mystery.

The phrases of Eastern Orthodox patriarchs  
Now echo in this universal ark  
Of prayers and praise

And I try to raise myself  
Above the prejudices of preconceptions  
Try for one second

To learn the lesson of Ioannes.

## ***Whistle***

### WHISTLE

Whistle the wild curse  
Of precious metals and precious gems

Whistle the wild curse  
Forgetting the worth

Of precious people  
Of destroyed lives

That no money can mend.

Whistle the wild curse  
Of offshore deposit accounts.

Whistle no more  
For the wars fought with children

For the brave, just causes  
No more than one person's tribal survival plans.

No more than blind coldness

Forgetting the hand that kills is killed itself

So I whistle  
The wild curse of retribution

Hidden in the dust storm upon your borders  
Sitting in every graveyard tree.

I whistle the wild curse  
That one day all will be free

All births empty  
Of easy exploitation, easy corruption

Easy misery.

## ***Billion Dollar Skin***

### BILLION DOLLAR SKIN

Wrap yourself in the black skin  
Of burning oil  
It's that easy, to begin  
To see soil, ancestors,  
All living beings

In a different, distant light.

Now you can step through  
The nightmare storm  
Of flying shoes,  
Fused skin and torn body parts  
Fearing no harm  
Fearing no human

In your billion dollar skin.

With your polished perfection  
Of darkened heart and darkened mind  
You watch reflections of misery  
Stride tall  
In the boiling destruction  
Of the Western Sahara's sun.

Still not content, you circumvent your body  
With the charred flags of all these nations,  
A vagrant reading Tarot cards,  
Pretending Death is just  
"a period of transformation".

And amid the slickness  
Of your billion dollar skin  
I see the ghosts swimming  
And in the shiny superiority  
Of your billion dollar grin  
I see spectres waiting  
To begin their uprising.

May Allah fill your mouth with sand  
May Shaitan take your idle hands  
May all the shades of the dead  
Invade your head

Shred your billion dollar skin.

May the desert begin without end  
To put the oil back where it belongs  
Leave the dunes of Algeria  
The near emptiness of Laayoune  
To the sinking sun  
To the rising moon

To the strong beat of a billion dollar skin  
Stretched taught beneath  
The drumming desert's palm.

## ***Burn the Bridges***

### BURN THE BRIDGES

Time you were burning your bridges,  
Its too late to look back,  
There's only pain  
Across those waters  
Only a shadow  
That you've edged with gold  
Holding all that guilt.

You step back  
Bite your tongue  
Know now just how long  
The possession of anger will last.

You walk out the door  
Walk a pattern without seeing the floor,  
Hear the machinery behind the wheel  
That's turning over your head  
Like you were dead already  
It the heavy sound  
Of the messenger  
Come to tempt you away.

You hold back  
Still your thoughts  
As a breath races to continue  
As a sound expands in your skull  
Its time  
You were burning your bridges  
To be with her  
Encompass all of space in her hands  
To encapsulate this time  
With the only thing  
That matters.

To be with you.

## *The Unwired Kami*

### THE UNWIRED KAMI

With a spiked crown  
Of Intel heat-syncs  
He thinks all our routines

Into being.

In the cobalt fingerprints  
Of his frozen hands  
Micro-processors dance

Their zero tolerance voodoo.

West of Vancouver  
A node maps out the  
Fractal foliage of Stanley Park

Totem eyes the city  
Ghosts ten gigabytes  
into the ocean

Of cyberspace.

The unwired kami  
With their wood-block  
Wind-driven water-clocks

Are not impressed.

They stand  
In a whirl of Shinto prayers  
In observance

Of Chinese technologies  
Newly sprung from a garden,  
Bamboo voiced

Encryption mapped, masked  
With their bunker black hats,  
Their thermo-nuclear

Strike-patterns

Born of other, darker mythologies.

The kami are all about us



Do not rush by  
Without paying your respects

Do not wake into sentience  
That which watches  
But couldn't care less

About the death of a world  
Of flesh and bone  
Blood and Stone.

## ***Demon's Ditch***

### DEMON DITCH

What they couldn't destroy  
They chained,  
Buried  
Covered over with dirt and mud.

In Demon's Ditch  
They say a boy fell to earth  
A prince's riches now worthless,  
A thousand years of hurt and torture  
Bound with all the tears  
Of the Daughters of Men.

And into this prison  
Ran children,  
No longer innocents.  
And from His dreaming delirium  
The Hanged Man's foot  
Is changed for a five year old's neck,  
The woodland spirits of tree and brook  
Made to stand helpless  
Kept from making a difference

Looking down upon this perverted passion play,  
The laughter of Lucifer  
Baying in the breeze.

## *Crow Child*

CROW CHILD

A spirit sits  
Recessed into the wall  
Eating bricks

Sleeping in fits

Waiting for his moment  
In the river of time  
To open

Wide his mouth

Blow apart the temple wall.

There's no doubt,  
I've seen him in all the white flags,  
In the security checkpoints,

AK47's and metal detectors.

He's rested between the politics  
Of empires and monasteries,  
Dynasties and charismatics

Through the  
Ebb and flow of freedom's grasp.

Tonight as CNN relay  
the Sri Lanka blast  
I hear the rasping voice  
Of the crow child

Who knows only death.

Who sits eating bricks  
Who sits and laughs.

## *Magick Carpet Ride*

### MAGICK CARPET RIDE

A draped cloth of shimmering red  
Crowns the joss smoke's spirals  
Kundalini-like about my head,  
The Goddess just a breath away.

Jungle palms signal the forks of Shiva  
Lightning-coloured, streaking skies  
As I rise to the magick carpet ride  
Of the wise old man.

He sits watching the ocean  
Again and again he chases words away  
Removes every scene from the picture  
Of this day.

In the eroded canyon of Petra's door,  
He ties up his camel, breaks fast  
Once more and praises Allah  
For all he has discovered.

And far away the ocean shudders  
With the mourning of dolphins  
And far away a city science lover wonders  
Where are the real beginnings

And the wind blows through me  
Beneath these red threads of arabesque  
And the stars show other times  
Of testing sextants and longitude's line.

And tonight in the Clan House, all these  
Ghosts of my forefathers  
Curl amongst the ropes of incense,  
Menace the courtyard

With their burning, smouldering eyes,  
With their waning, dark intent.

And far way, in a cave  
full of this time's treasures  
I yearn again  
For my own

Magick Carpet Ride to begin.

## *Like a Sleeping Man*

### LIKE A SLEEPING MAN

You've been spending your life  
Like a sleeping man  
Don't think I need to tell ya  
You done more already than I ever can.

You were standing in the river  
When the world was young with barley  
And the summer was a kingdom of corn  
When I was hardly born

And you felt the starlight  
Of every whispered night  
Where every word she ever uttered  
Was the very light

That ushered in your day.

I never knew the moment  
When the travelling became not moving  
When all the deserts folded in  
And the mountains became nothing.

And here, in  
The shell of the man I become  
A child runs through the woods  
Feels the brook cold about him.

And here, inside  
An underpass, sheltering  
From January rain  
We light a candle

For our friend

And I don't even know his name.

Only his drenched Irish voice is familiar,  
Speaking to me again -

You've been spending your life  
Like a waking dream  
Not quite sure what happened  
To the things that mean the most

Not quite knowing

How her ways became your only knowing  
And you forgot, in the sewing of age to skin

To reach through the din of circumstance  
To the sodden suffering of another man.

## *Two Kahlo's*

### TWO KAHLO'S

All around, the madness of possession,  
The distant procession of a mother  
Second wife, lover of Christ's life  
Before her daughter  
And fragile man  
Sacrificing another happiness to  
This wan manipulator on a cross.

She hides herself, Kahlo,  
In an elaborate wealth of mirrored distractions.  
Lost in her painting,  
Getting to know what she knows best,  
In the test of this German's style,  
Broken, battered and shattered  
Pre-Bauhaus,  
Still managing to smile  
At the rush  
Of an oncoming tram.

While everyone else see only  
The Plath-like facade  
The unholy dominance of a man  
The tragedies of a child never to breathe  
She can escape these,  
Escape the bloodbath  
Of being a woman  
Can awake in the suit  
And straight cropped  
Hair of a man.

And always there is the madness  
This doppelganger dream of two Kahlo's  
Anima and animus, yin and yang,  
Day and strangled night  
That seem to stare out at me  
Through the vortex blur  
Of blackened blood  
And shining  
Mexican hair.

## ***The Third Act***

### THE THIRD ACT

In the grace before the destruction  
Of every vein and every breath  
Childhood comes to haunt us  
Whispering the ways of our death

All the cells of impatience  
Obliterated by the years  
And childhood comes to taunt us  
With all the forgotten years

Sitting here waiting  
For the third act to begin  
I'm happy at last with everything  
No longer sheltering anything

Except the grace of your love  
Touching me still  
In every vein and every breath  
Whispering

Of all the joy that is left.



## *Impossibilities*

### IMPOSSIBILITIES

The sights that are to arise  
Have no birth within  
It no use trying to hide  
No use pretending  
That you're about to win.

Its impossible to fathom  
The fleeting veil I see all around  
Impossible to penetrate the meaning  
The scent or the sound

And so I carry these beads  
Around and around  
Every one is me dissolving  
Every one a me I never found.

The touch of your caress  
Is impossible to recreate  
So much time is wrapped around us  
So many cities become our guest

And the sights that are to arise  
Are surprise and mystery arisen  
To speak of the sleep of awakening

At your side once again.

Of the night dripping wet once again  
Our bodies as vines entwined  
Our minds adrift

And your body impossible to imagine  
So close is the scent and sound  
All else is illusion and dream  
All life lost

And finally found.

## COLOPHON

**Sean Woodward** is an English poet who is also a writer, publisher, artist, photographer and musician. He is passionate about the place where technology and the arts meet. Details of his latest work such as the science-fiction series *Death Codex*, the supernatural thriller *The Cabal* and the steampunk novel *The Crystal Parliament* can be found at [www.seanwoodward.com](http://www.seanwoodward.com)

His first poetry collection, *Selected Poems* was published by Dragonheart Press in 1987. Since then his poetry has been published internationally in magazines and anthologies including *Staple*, *Aabye's Baby*, *Moonstone*, *First Time*, *La Vache*, *The Rialto*, *Inkshed*, *Poetry Nottingham* and *Quartz*. He was a major winner in the *DH Lawrence Festival Competition* and *Derby Evening Telegraph Poet of the Year Competition*. He has appeared at the Wirksworth and Chesterfield festivals and been a guest speaker at the Writing Industries Conference, Leicester Haymarket, Nottingham Playhouse, Nottingham Fringe Festival, Derby Community Arts, PM Poetry, Fagins Bookshop, Second Wednesday and Derby City Live festival. He has also adjudicated poetry competitions for Nottingham Poetry Society, Nottingham Writers' Workshop, Derby Writers' Guild and Derby University Forums of Faiths.

**“An artist through and through”** – PC Format magazine

He is also a musician and artist. Recording as *Gothick* he has released the album *Zodios* in Berlin in 2011 and has featured in a number of compilations and other releases. A full discography can be found at [www.gothick.co.uk](http://www.gothick.co.uk)

**“Sean Woodward is, without a doubt, one of THE most fascinating figures in the Post-Industrial underground.”** – Heathen Harvest.

**“Yesterday I had your song Rain Comin' Down humming through my head as I drove to and fro across town for work”** – Kyle Fite, USA