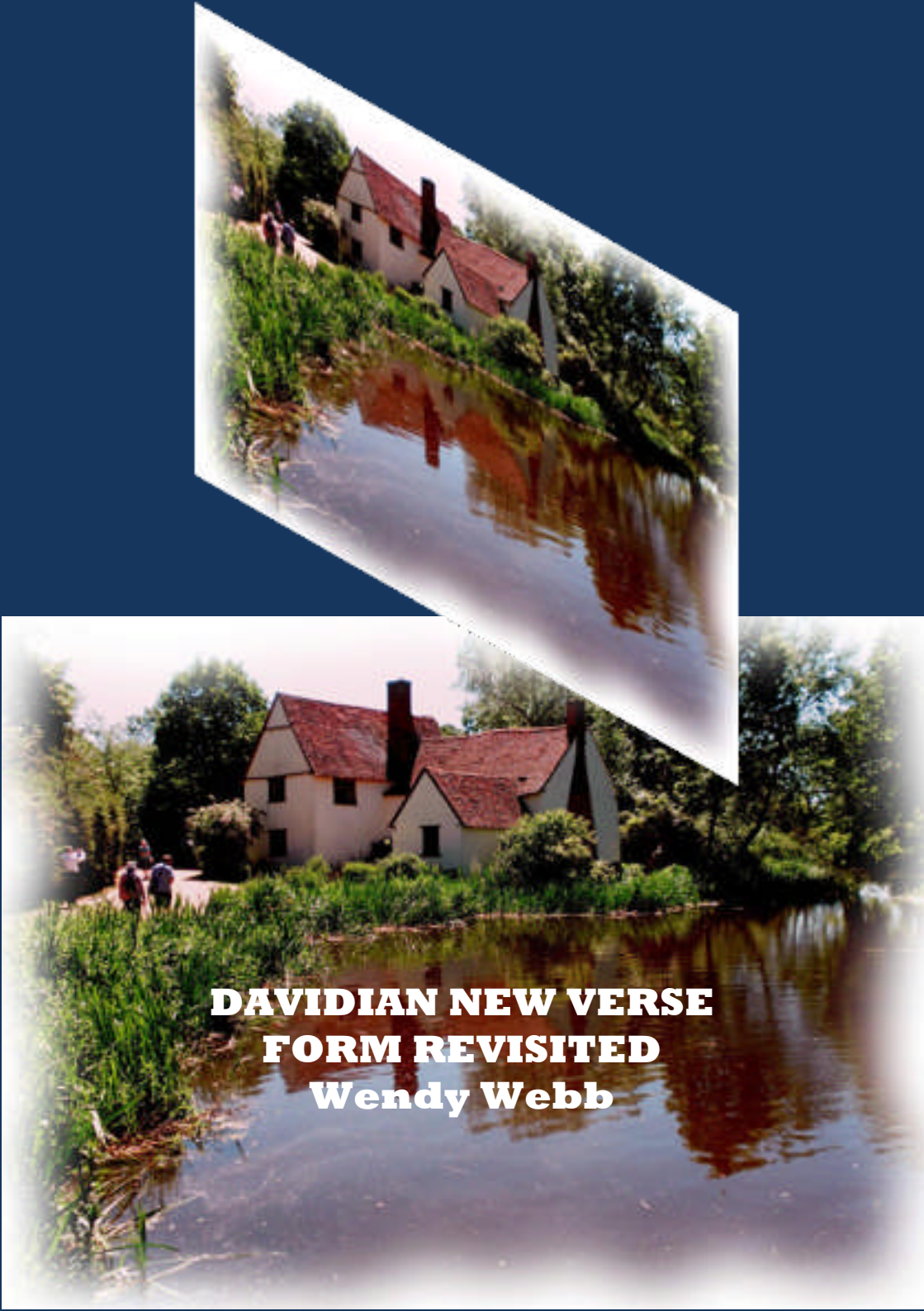

DAVIDIAN NEW VERSE FORM REVISITED

Wendy Webb

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DAVIDIAN NEW VERSE FORM REVISITED
Wendy Webb

This collection is dedicated to Norfolk Poets & Writers

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DAVIDIAN, New verse form 2002
by Wendy Webb

This new poetry form has been developed from the Jewish-Christian tradition. In the Bible the number FORTY has great significance, meaning a very long time; also, the number SEVEN, meaning perfection. The Bible also speaks of a Year of Jubilee, fifty years. The Davidian Poem is launched in the Golden Jubilee year of Queen Elizabeth II. It is named after the first anointed Jewish King David; in the New Testament, Jesus is described as the 'son of David'. The new poetry form, the DAVIDIAN POEM, devised by Wendy Webb, is based on the numbers 40 (long time) and 7 (perfection).

English literature has roots in Biblical tradition, Greek and Roman philosophy (Milton, Blake, Herbert, Bronte's 'Jane Eyre', C S Lewis, Tolkien). Much of our poetry is based on iambic pentameter (5 feet, 10 syllables) as in Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth and Yeats. Through Shakespeare's plays, blank verse became popular (unrhymed iambic pentameter). Rhyme Royale (seven line stanza) also uses the significant number seven, probably with royal connections (James 6th of Scotland, James 1st of England), although the form dates back to Chaucer.

The Davidian poem uses four lines of 10 syllables (total 40 syllables). The fifth line has seven syllables. The fifth line may either stand alone, or form part of a cinquain (5 line stanza). Syllable count: 10-10-10-10-7.

The Davidian does not need end-rhyme, but you must keep to the syllable count in every verse. You may choose any combination of rhyming styles, (AABBC, ABABC, ABBAC). You have forty syllables "a long time" to present your theme, the seven-syllable line must

achieve perfection. You may use a repeating line, write sequentially, or include a famous quote from English literature.

When you begin your poem with the shorter 7 syllable line, it is called a Reverse Davidian. Each verse must be the same.

The shortest Davidian is one verse, there is no maximum number of stanzas, but the distinctive 40 and 7 (10-10-10-10-7) in each verse. The form ceases to be Davidian when mixed with other syllable counts and stanzas.

ALL YOU NEED IS… EDEN (Davidian)
Wendy Webb

One day, a long time ago,
I considered mother love eternal,
nuclear family, the universe;
a father's caring arms all-protecting.
Strange how the world and I have grown older.

One day, a long time ago,
I considered the world large, untrammelled,
nuclear holocaust, a fading hell;
a father's caring arms, like God's, supreme.
Strange how the world falls out of family.

One day, a long time ago,
I considered parenting, like apples,
male/female hybrid in a fertile plot;
a father's caring arms and mother's love.
Strange how fruit-bearing branches spread so far.

One day, a long time ago
I will consider a father's bruised arms:
the cider keg of special families.
Mother Earth, yet flushed with bright-orb apples –
strange how Eve's sons regain new Eden's fruit.

FOR THE WOMEN OF RUSSIA
(Davidian) Wendy Webb

He knows his children, every one by name,
they are as many as the stars in heaven:
above, a multitude of shining orbs,
lost seas of measured faces in the deep.
Lives too bright to flicker out.

Mother Sarah, safe no more –
for schools are everywhere and children go
and terrorists can plot in any town
and fail to hear, like Abraham heard God,
save Isaac sons to grace our future race.

For in the harvest field the sickle swings
and God will not let fall a single grain
of wheat, but gather it for dough and bread.
Rise, stare at stars beyond your deepest night:
seeds of life will feed a host.

Mothers strike each candle's match
and fire the precious light of every child,
so Russian women see the circling stars
and darkness flees in shame from innocence;
for heaven's countless stars – snuffed out – still shine.

SEVEN STAGES OF THE MOON (Davidian) Wendy Webb

Seasons of love yet blooming

And I remember as the falling snow
when, dressed in lace and flowers blushing pink,
I braved the freezing season, just to frame
how eager lovers' hearts melt frozen ice.

Seasons of love yet blooming

And I remember blossom's May shall fade,
still shifting spring's young steps to winter's sheet
and earth to earth, we buried life not love;
a son of Galilee heard Jesus' call.

Seasons of love yet blooming

And I remember June, the longest day;
all night we stormed, to harbour firstborn's sea
into his Moses basket, Norfolk's reeds.
Sunshine and gales freaked August, when we met.

Seasons of love yet blooming

And I remember Blickling's burnished hues,
lake walks and courting in walled gardens; books,
admiring fireside woodlands, ceiling high.
Such carefree trust. 'My hair,' you wooed, 'brick red.'

Seasons of love yet blooming

And is it true, locks fade to Christmas love,
as robin, last-born, scared our seasoned hours?
He could not pipe bright music in dense drifts;
Epiphany, our gift, we brought him home.

Seasons of love yet blooming

And is it true, 'all's fair in love and war'?
Our fevered seasons synchronised as one,
to wax and wane, just phases of our moon.
Love's fickle tides won constancy's bright stage.

Seasons of love yet blooming

And I remember, snowdrops ever peep,
bright fairies dancing rainbows round each tree
in crocus crowns, enchanting all who glean
jewels of the heart... for seasons never change.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE (Davidian)
Wendy Webb

Where will I be in ten years?
I hardly know where I will be next week,
yesterday is carefully written down,
tomorrow I might make it up to town.
How can I plan? I don't know what I seek.

Where will I be? In ten years
I might be dead, or ill, or something worse;
the world out there might have moved in to stay
and England may live only in a play.
Threats civilise no timing, nor each curse –

where will I BE in ten years –
and will there even be a homely earth?
I'm living for the moment's might have been:
my drowning life bleeds past me scene by scene.
Perhaps a World's Brave News will leave no mirth.

Where's 'Will I be?' In ten years
my children may have failed to fly the nest,
insanity may leave me without care,
inanity descend into a stare
and then, perhaps, I'll take a well-earned rest.

Where's Will? 'I'll be,' (in ten years)
'or I won't be.' Such noble questioning,
which fades away like grass and like all life.
All's Vanity. UnFair in human strife,
when balanced in the final reckoning.

CANDLES ON THE WIND FOR BESLAN (Davidian) Wendy Webb

My son ran from school today.
He laughed and skipped and drank to quench his thirst,
he did not run half-naked through the streets,
or drench upon our screens his own lifeblood.
My son ran home, for he was still alive.

My son's too young for terror,
too young to see the horror of those eyes:
the wildest eyes of humans filled with hate;
the bestial crimes of causes without hope,
of children standing tiptoe for their souls.

My son will not remember.
For Chechen dreams were murderous, insane
and Beslan's name will fade to infamy,
leaving empty child-beds; arms – loving – gone.
Withdraw, world lens, the terror of your eyes.

Blood-stench of independence:
for Chechnya grows weaker with each drop
that stains its cause with blood-guilt of world youth
and, godless, sacrifices childish grace.
No kamikaze snuffs these candles out.

Mothers go to school no more
to wave your children at the gate with tears
of pride (you see them bravely stepping in
to nurturing and education's power
and privilege) that they may grow; excel.

Mothers of earth - safe no more -
for schools are everywhere and children go
and terrorists can plot in any town
and fail to hear their god, like Abraham,
save Isaac sons to grace each future race.

Mothers strike each candle's match
and fire the precious light of every child,
so Russian women see the circling stars
and darkness flees in shame from innocence;
for heaven's countless stars – snuffed out – shine bright.

TOMORROW I LOVE YOU (Davidian)
Wendy Webb

I think of curry nights and Footie days,
of TV gardens, DIY and home.
I cheer up when the weather gets me down
and Soaps dance so I never walk alone.
That scene's for ever England.

I think of marches, bright as daffodils,
of freedom of the Press, past Stars, repeats.
Our pleasant land, though green, shades every dream
and heart beats hope, as seasons blessed with rain.
That scene's for ever: England.

I think of poppy red and bluebell sky,
of yellow daffs and hawthorn's blooming snow.
My feet spring names, like lambs, when faith's renewed
and khaki's bravest boys scent summer's air.
That scene's for ever – England.

FRIENDLY HEAVEN FROM SEASONS PAST (Davidian) Wendy Webb

I could imagine a heaven like that:
like wave on rosy wave of trumpet clouds;
sun's sheen so bright, no mediocre shades.
A raucous, lurid rhododendron spring,
the past and future blending.

I could imagine a heaven like that –
like a mist springing from manicured lawn
and daisies never out of place among
a bluebell sea, for ever England's shore.
The past and future blending.

I could imagine a heaven like that;
like wisteria's azure - arbour's surf -
a bench secluded from earth's harshest stare.
No queues of tourists for a photograph;
the past and future blending.

I could imagine a heaven like that,
like trees of proud magnolias in bloom
and late daffodils virgin as the snow
and buttercups that drop like clotted cream,
the past and future blending.

I could imagine a heaven like that.
Like chinks of classic crockery piled high
and pots of creamy tea and buttered scones.
Friends' smiles, as fairy cups, when we get home -
the past and future blending.

I could imagine a heaven like that,
when Norfolk's Blickling Hall may fail to charm
and loved ones wait, but on some distant shore
where life is spring's eternal psalmody,
the past and future's blending.

HOLY TOKENS OF LOVE (Davidian)
Wendy Webb

If all of life holds darling its bright start
- elapsed as fading moon days since we met -
not owning bodies' brushwork, truly loaned,
then love-endearing hearts can never part
for those canonised by love.

If ending's indefensible, like art,
sketched morning consecration, not sundown.
Fund's richest patron, blessed in paint's aureole,
gleams palette's infinite but sacred tart:
for she's canonised by love.

If music plays breezed oceans' beating heart,
fine silence airs a melody's concerns
of harping harmony, so synchronised,
that instruments play timbre's muse, uncharted,
for tones canonised by love.

If poetasters savour grace apart,
raise sanctifying blessings, undisguised;
beatified, their prose holds beauty's flow.
Sprung poesy's hallowed, rhythm-fresh sweetheart.
Canon law foretokens love.

Inspired by John Donne, The Canonization.

IT'S DECEMBER (Davidian)
Wendy Webb

Late leaves are falling thick this year, like snow,
in floating light of winter's glowing gold.
Deep drifting earth of amber's cheering warmth
then sparks a blaze, too late for bonfire's flush.
Rage against the dying light.

Viburnum's floret blush bursts white to shine
in dull and darkened skies of grey and green,
while rhododendron's slowly fattened buds
soon promise summer's moist and turgid blooms.
Rage against dark's coming night.

Sharp frosts have shot begonias to death;
some, cradled in the hay, will bloom next year.
Pot mums have stained their pretty frocks to surf
their laundered tide marks, pegged to autumn's-course.
Rage a year once cradled, stiff.

It's cold and still and yet our songbirds bring
their ringing sundown of a year reborn.
Forlorn, no natal star, yet blackbirds tease
where robins, brash as berries, please the scene.
Rage for nature's stinging night.

All buds and bulbs mark winter's timely phase
and trace a fine maturing wine, to pour
rich heady scents, enriching longed-for spring.
Romance ferments, with birds, to fevered rage:
effervescent songs of light.

Inspired by: 'Rage' repeats from 'Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night' Dylan Thomas.

LIFE IS LIKE A BUTTERFLY (Davidian)
Wendy Webb

The sun has never been this age before
and by no means, today, can I ask more.
If I live through a hundred years' lifespan
I cannot gain this day, a son of man.
Heart of a magpie – never.

The moon will wax and wane through fickle nights,
yet these, my eyes, have failed to see such sights.
My ears will never sound such melody
and taste, with age, is merely parody.
Soul of a magpie – ever.

The stars will shimmer new upon my sea
and every moment's sheen is part of me.
If I could glean perfection's pristine scent,
I'd paradise each day as heaven-meant.
Courage of a butterfly.

ROYAL LEAVEN FOR THE LOAF (Davidian) Wendy Webb

Who could predict a nation's grief might flow
beyond close family and homes we know.
How could our lives, compressed into a span,
stretch century's birth to every man.
Queen Mother, we miss your smile.

Who could predict dull age would bloom in death
to bunting fit for Sovereign's gold wreath.
How could earth, pinpricked by Royal leaven,
transform our blue soul-veins - fit for heaven.
Queen Mother, we miss your smile.

LANDSCAPE OF BREAD (Davidian)
Wendy Webb

You bake the focus in my background's scene,
the oven-rock that rises on flat plain;
smoke figure leading in, until I lean
a panoramic backdrop's tempting lane:
You are gentle on my eyes.

You are the friendly face within a crowd,
a long-lost childhood placeness in a day;
a music, rich as thunder, thrilling loud,
when all I do is hang on what you say.
You are gentle on my ears.

You are the scent of curry, beer or wine;
of sweat, or nightbreath, or the richest urge
to stir in juice that savours your love, mine,
fermenting brew's aromas as they merge;
you are gentle scent and taste.

You are cool breeze upon my cheek or ear,
soft tickle of fine hair upon my neck;
the scratch of stubble heaving pump-hearts near;
shock-ache of Roman baths, to brook a beck.
You are gentle to my touch.

You are my meteor in a God-filled heaven;
a navigation light to sail past hell.
You dough my flesh into a sweeter leaven;
delicious scent or taste, where all is well.
You are gentlest on my flesh.

DAISY CHAINS IN JANUARY (Davidian)
Wendy Webb

There's something in the air today, that's new,
so light that I could skip and leave all cares.
It could be how the sun is shining bright,
although my cheeks are chill with morning breeze.
There must be something somewhere?

There's something in the air today, the sky
is bright and light, removed from cloud-low damp.
It could be those absurd but species daffs,
always-early snowdrops, or aconites.
There must be something somewhere...

There's something in the air and in the soil,
so light that nature's chain-free with delight.
It could be the first day without foul gales,
or laughter at brash daisies on the lawn.
There <u>must</u> be something, somewhere.

FROM THE CRADLE TO THE GRAVE (Davidian) Wendy Webb

The West is born expecting not to die,
so cradled from the grave of human birth
until the dawn of ageing death, the lie
that they are safe in health, in heaven and earth...
and how simple life appears.

The West is born to travel everywhere:
so deceived by beauty on the glossy page;
until 'the world's their oyster', anywhere
that succulence, or wanderlusts, engage
and how simple life appears.

The West is born expecting pain's relief:
so palliative care calms tide's inconstancy,
until the ocean ebbs, consuming grief
that wrecks, yet leaves no trace uncertainty
and how simple life appears.

The West is born expecting freedom's speech,
so injustice then is silence hard to hear
until the TV lens may, shocking, reach
that crystal flood: humanity made clear
and how simple life appears.

The West is born expecting help and care:
so sanity means breath's not soon dissolved,
until all precious life has had a share
that safety gives, in joy, when pain's resolved;
and how simple life appears.

HUMANITY'S TIDE (Davidian)
Wendy Webb

There is no reason in the tides of man
or woman, raised as flotsam on the sea.
Can this be all the reason, all of me?
For nothing shades our flimsy brief life span.
The harbour wave has gone now.

There is no reason in the shifting sand
of maps retraced, all-sweeping, without care.
Can this inhuman reason be unfair?
For life is but a season left unplanned.
The harbour wave has gone now.

There is no reason in the storms of life,
where fast shores slow; where aid consumes, bedecked
as fishing rigs, where reason's dreams are wrecked.
Becalmed upon the charts of human strife.
The harbour wave has gone now.

There is no reason in the waxing moon,
sucked fat with tears and bright eternal beams.
Can reason, waning, leave all as it seems,
for death will claim each one so famished soon.
The harbour wave has gone now.

There is a reason death is born of birth:
we grow within a perfect fluid world.
Can foetal reason breathe room, limbs uncurled?
- Becalmed, our womb-grown souls, to ocean's worth.
The harbour wave has gone now.

THE PERFUME SPILT (Davidian)
Wendy Webb

'What has more fascination than a face'
that fills our treasured vessel with such grace,
to pour, at our Lord's feet, its every trace
and sanctify the air of loving place?
Eloquence spilling from jars.

What has more assignation than a scent,
that memorises pleasures, lost or lent,
to therapy aroma's passions, spent,
and perfume dreams that love was heaven-meant?
Eloquence spilling from jars.

SHROUDED LOVE (Davidian)
Wendy Webb

Our love of the night before was still damp,
holding faded petals of stained laundry,
for yesterday was a long time ago,
suds lost in the hum of the washing machine.
'But the corpse... went on dying.'

Our love of a hundred nights and mornings,
like sludge after a chilled and frosty fall;
though seasons budded to a brighter spring,
love's ache had vanished in the common touch.
But the corpse went on dying.

Our love, a thousand dark and stormy nights:
hay tossed to bales of sustenance in barns.
Doors slammed to warm long winter drifts ahead,
passing before the endless sights of guns.
But the corpse went on dying.

Our love, ten thousand strokes of fickle time,
grey flicker of dull TV screens where life
expired before curved query's feeble eyes,
where common love was death and no hope raised.
But the corpse went on dying.

Our love, a million brushes in God's hands,
where paint was blood and sweat and sorrow's tears
and death, uncomely bright as love deceased,
where eyes wrapped shrouded vacancy of touch
and the corpse slowly stood up.

Inspired by: 'But the corpse, it was sad! Went on dying.' From 'Espanā, Aparta De Me Este' by Caliz César Vallejo (trans. Robert Bly).

WHEN BEAUTIFUL IS THE ONLY WORD (Davidian) Wendy Webb

Pretty prose at every twist.
I look for less Wordsworthian themes to write
about this mountain valley's grey-flushed sight.
My chamber pen could dip bog depths of stone,
erupting tissue, magma's glorious throne.

But I can find no other wordless site
that rises to heaven's crest as if by right,
in sun or storm, a dinosaur of bones
like bleached lake sheep, or lichened rocks' dull tones.
Pretty prose at every turn.

Pretty prose at every twist.
A valley like Sahara's searing heat;
aged mountains, fading quicksand of green feet.
Pipe's winding stream, iced air in desert nights.
Cars' winding road, dark-blasted moving lights.

Full 1 in 4 lies Wrynose Pass, complete;
as Hardknott Pass stands 1 in 3, replete.
No view's extinct, to wing eternal sights
of ancient stones in palette-toning whites.
Pretty prose at every turn.

WHERE FEAR RESTS (Davidian)
Wendy Webb

There is no excuse, of course,
for leaving a young woman for dead, for
raising a spectre in the countryside,
where back doors are left open, gossip grows.
Nothing awakens senselessness like waste.

There is no excuse, of course,
for a young mother, bleeding in a lane
in broad daylight, where deeds are less dirty
by night, by highways, by housing estates;
beside slops of putrid humanity.

There is no excuse, of course,
for threatening a child, holding a knife,
slashing decency at the neck, spurting
shock of poppies. Slumping beside a scream
as a toddler learns probabilities.

There is no excuse, of course:
where depth seeps white as imagination,
breeds like weeds, gossips safety's wall of thorns;
until the blackbird fails to sing or nest.
Excuses? There never could be, could there?

CRYSTAL LAKE (Davidian)
Wendy Webb

Somewhere close to Avalon,
a knight and lady rise out of the lake
of death and deep despair where earth rotates
in Armageddon fury, Arthur's loss
of innocence and duty at hell's dross

of apple-bitten Eden.
Long-gone the nakedness of Guinevere,
dew-stepping God's bright morning atmosphere
where Adam's angels do not fear raised swords,
crossed banishment of Lady Lake, boat moored.

Spare Isaac's ram-caught brother
rage-herding dissolution into state.
Daub woad on Esau's angry shade of hate:
planed to a crystal lake's Excalibur,
where truth is sheathed in justice and saint spurs

hang as star-shields on a tree.
Now coracle the legend-Celtic past,
where beauty's scriptures, all recorded, last
until the island sinks to mist awake
beyond Pendragon's breath where crystals break

dawn's House of Bread, divided.
Then share the crumbs where famished starvelings feed
and drink the cup where suffering may lead
the blade and chalice, proofed to grail in heaven,
while golden sheaves of corn raise peace as leaven.

MINIMAL DAVIDIANS (one verse only)

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE
Wendy Webb

There's simply one thing I'm dying to say,
before shock dulls each bleeding autumn day
and mobiles wail, connecting life with death.
Paper ships in puddles; our daily breath.
Mortality: mine, yours, theirs.

FULL OF EASTERN PROMISE
Wendy Webb

Flowers bright as my imagination,
summer's bloom in perfect combination;
for Monet will relax, too thralled to paint
and nature's Evensong will bless a saint.
Packets of seeds – such promise.

PATTING A PASTORAL SHIFT
Wendy Webb

It was never meant to be:
the bloom of youth and hope of love, all gone.
My song of seasons, crumpled, blotchy, brown.
Perhaps these driftings of my dense dreams leave –
how now, dull cow, discern why I've grown weeds.

WINTER'S SCRIBE Wendy Webb

It seems so long since summer burnt us dry.
The damp is blotting up our bones in cold,
ink days are etched with twigs and sullen bark
and paper-white, we wait for winter drifts.
Falling silently—cool words.

COUNTENANCING ROYALTY Wendy Webb

I think I see a likeness in her face,
A growing fifty years or more of grace.
When mourns this nation for our Sovereign Queen,
Shall mothers, hard-pressed, modern, throng that scene?
Royal autumn, soon to fall.

SIMPLY FAILING TO EXIST Wendy Webb

You never shook the world, nor your rattle;
such absent eyes, to recognise no face.
Never grew impatient of your prattle,
or Primary, marked bare your new star's trace.
Simply, you failed to exist.

THE CRYSTAL CRACKED (Davidian)
Wendy Webb

I remember that last time
you sat, good like a child, I brushed your hair,
so helpless in night waves that 'It's not fair'
and combing wisps to careful parting, fought
your mothering, for shine could not be taught.

I remember that last time
you did not fill your gown, but seemed to shrink
and, Alice, room grown brash, I could not think,
yet pricking, as a hairpin, left that day,
closed white-ribbed curtains finally; so say

I remember that last time.
You floated seas of faces, grey, unknown
and grief swept early, left me grave, alone.
My dreams were paper boats I could not steer,
your silence or my noise grown crystal clear.

I remember that last time.
It's shattered now, your vase cracked on my shelf;
no sweeter sorrow's faded petal: health.
Rage, mirror, mist! I comb my hair's remains,
meet hell's moored face – shine heaven's wakened pains.

IN THE HANDS OF GOD (Davidian)
Wendy Webb

Believers know there is a time to die,
when mortal coils are dropped and life's no more,
when they're no longer traced in memories
of generations born after they're gone.
Living fleshed in hands of God.

Believers know that all is birth's demise:
one moment there; another gone; as wind.
So season's tides, tsunamis, rise and fall;
then breathe walled cries into another life.
Oceaned in God's flesh, reborn.

Believers think their death deceases all
who, infidels, raise Gods on foreign shores.
They misread, translate Scriptures into flesh
- untangling the wide world enmeshed in hate;
embodied in Paradise.

Believers, unbelievers know star-time
to boldly go: live/die, to sow or reap;
raise cries for justice on the wings of death,
to weep with those who weep; to shout; to laugh.
God's bruised hand becomes a fist.

CHRISTMASES SO LONG AGO
(Davidian) Wendy Webb

It only seems like yesterday, of course,
that tiny kitchen in a council house.
Bent, with your railway rags, near kitchen floor,
lift-sliding chicken roast through oven door.
Ah, dad, do you remember?

Gas cooker crammed with aluminium pans
and kettle, whistling mad in steaming strands.
The backdoor open wide, not padlocked tight;
a pantry, table, sink and low-watt light.
Ah, dad, do you remember?

Our nostrils, fat with stuffing smells and meat,
marge-mashed potato, gravy, processed peas.
We ached to eat the finest English fayre,
for chicken was, to us, most fowl and rare.
Ah, dad, do you remember?

Those sleeping bags for camping, stuffing rich,
where padding wedged in corners, draughts unstitched:
but Santa always knew what they were for,
I never thought how fat or light they were.
Ah, dad, do you remember?

So magical each Christmas morning, we
crawled in and rummaged to the feet to see
and feel that rustling wrapping paper, shock
to toys and stocking treats to eat, or books...
Ah, dad, do you remember?

You hung the fairy lights across the room
and balanced cards along the wire to form
a garland to retrieve - the same each year -
with silver-glittered tree, such sparkling cheer.
Ah, dad, do you remember?

My sister glowed with pride, just sweet sixteen,
her infant fat with gurgles; nappy beams.
We smiled at crackers, childish 'uncle', 'aunt';
such seasoned families could never part.
Ah, dad, do you remember?

Balloons and paper chains, what could there be
but carols, baby Jesus, Queen at three?
A virgin mother, fine, on Christmas cards –
absenting heaven, earth, and yet not hard.
Ah, dad, do you remember?

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I cannot touch a bauble without thrill
and tinsel, rich as taste, is with me still.
The glow of coloured lights, as fairy stars,
'home for Christmas' could never be so far.
Ah, dad, do you remember?

Each time I touch a coloured sherry glass,
fine Harvey's pouring shape glows Christmas-vast.
The cabinet is open, ritual fresh
and sleigh bells jingle Santa's eve afresh.
Ah, dad, do you remember?

And now my infants holy, infants mild,
are challenge-fat to ritual's hopeful child.
They leave out stockings, sherry, cool mince pies,
for natal charm stars all our Christmas highs.
Now, dad, you must remember.

Each Santa adds choice fayre to his long list,
and Rudolph gets the carrots he's been wished.
So sleigh bells ring and jingle round our tree
until their Christmas child is there to see.
And, dad, will you remember?

LONDON FOR THE SEASONED TRAVELLER (Davidian) Wendy Webb

I love to visit London in the spring
for even April showers make me sing:
umbrella saris, bright on Oxford Street,
Trafalgar Square's proud Nelson, fount not fleet
and crowds flow over bridges.

All London summers bloom in Regent's Park
and Shakespeare plays through sun or storm – a lark.
More fun in Leicester Square, Madame Tussaud's,
or I can queue to view the House of Lords,
while crowds flow over bridges.

So many plane trees, autumn paved in gold;
such architecture: graceful, tall and bold.
The Eye's all-seeing Parliament of lights,
Tate Modern's art, fantastical with frights.
Yet crowds flow over bridges.

I love to visit London's winter themes,
so capitol and heavenly, it seems:
with Harrods' fairy lights and Hamley's toys,
rich gifts for Mum and Dad and girls and boys
- still crowds flow over bridges.

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