

# **Shangra La, Volume 1**

## **Becalmed Without an Alibi**



**Poems by Ivor Steven**  
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## **Preface:**

### About the Author: Ivor Steven

Ivor is a former Industrial Chemist, who then at 30 years old, became a plumber, until his recent retirement, and now is a serious writer of poetry. He has had numerous poems (not books) published, in on-line magazines such as, Vita Brevis, SpillWords, Drabble, Wolff Poetry Journal, Festival of Poetry, Slasher Monster Magazine, Fae Corps Publishing and Free Verse Revolution. All these on-line magazines are American based publications. He is an active member of the Geelong Writers Inc. and many of his poems are published in their Anthologies. He started writing 19 years ago, after he had suffered a stroke, to help himself with his rehab process. During this time, and for the 30 years of his wife's, severe MS illness, Ivor was also the primary carer of his wife.

### Shangri La: Explanation

Shangri La is the nameplate above the front door of Ivor's Villa. The sign writing artwork was done by Ivor, and the meaning of Shangri La is. " a place regarded as an earthly paradise, especially when involving a retreat from the pressures of modern civilization".



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## **Words To You**

I wrote to you  
You wrote to me

Your words turned to scrawl  
Eyes began to call  
A crack crept down the wall  
You stood on the rubble so tall

We let the dust settle  
Heated up the Kettle  
Had a cuppa and a silent chat  
Light flows back through the crack

Words were our pearls  
Writing is my world

## **The Sun Kisses Everything**

Trees climb toward the unwrappable air  
Reaching for the nutritious sunlight  
Daylight kisses everything

Clouds flow beyond the blue skyline  
Reflecting the illustrious sunlight  
Daylight caresses everything

Dust accentuates silhouettes on the horizon  
Crystallizing the incorruptible sunlight  
Daylight touches everything

## **We Lost the “A” Side (a Senryu)**

There, on the “B”side  
Of her undiagnosed moon  
Lay my empty spoon

## **Volume Without Sound**

when I am swimming  
at the surf beach  
and dive deep down  
the eerie fullness  
of my silent surroundings  
enhances the volume  
of those submersed thoughts  
wafting within my mind

## **Schoolyards and Lizards**

Enter Richard the lizard

A wise and withered wizard

Who stealthily slithered and delivered

His magic beyond pandemics and blizzards

Recreating a safe haven

An unsmeared and inured schoolyard

To be shared by the children

Without the National Guard



## **A Sweaty Hat Day (a Haiku)**

A hot summer sky  
Above brown thirsty paddocks  
Sweat drips off my hat

## Holes In Doors

My owner left me  
Locked up in the courtyard  
Nothing unusual about that  
He left me some biscuit treats  
And a full bowl of water

However, he forgot  
To close the wire security screen  
Well, best I break in  
And protect our kennel  
“What would you have done?”

I started clawing and chewing  
At the exposed wood door  
Firstly I dug a small hole  
An opening I could bite  
My industrious teeth into  
Whoops and drats!  
There was another layer  
On the inside too!

I wasn't sure why  
My boss told me off  
When he arrived home  
I thought I was only trying to help  
He didn't appreciate my creativity

Time passed and Christmas arrived  
My extended family  
Were joking and laughing  
At my Aunt's gift for Dad  
Woof, woof. “A Doggie Door for me”

## **Trees Without Shadows**

A dry foggy dawn  
Eerily gloomy for summer  
Deep blurry clouds  
Brashly obscure the sun  
And thirsty barren trees  
Stand starkly without shadows

The becalmed and breathless world  
Waits for the anchored sky  
To hear the beckoning breeze  
Be aroused by the atmosphere's  
Guardian spirit bird  
Who ceremoniously waves his wings

**The Core (a Poem)**

*The Core (a Senryu)*

Existence crawls down  
Through my neck into the heart  
Of where my soul lies

*The Core (a Haiku)*

Through the winds of time  
Existence descends from trees  
Perpetually

## **A Cup of Coffee on The House**

### ***Fantasy.***

*A powerful Pacific Albatross  
Gracefully landed on fairy-moss  
That covered my welcoming pathway  
And graciously handed me a sacred Mandala*

### **Reality.**

The postman delivered a special parcel today  
A belated Christmas gift from America  
A wonderful hand-painted coffee mug  
And this afternoon I enjoyed  
“A Cup of Coffee on The House”  
Thanks to my friends at Coffee House Writers

## **The Untouchable and Invisible World**

The uncontrollable Digital World  
Is stuck in an unstoppable whirl  
Untouchable like a hot and crazy lava flow  
Madder than a mist and snow in the Congo

We do not physically experience the wireless connection  
Our world's computer reliance is a mental autoinfection  
Desperately requiring a House of Correction  
Before we crash into the horizon's unmanned intersection

### **Haiku (3)**

#### **To Blush Alone**

Embarrassingly  
Crimson roses stand alone  
Under the hot sun

#### **Defiantly**

Sunflowers do bloom  
Through the war of destruction  
Bravely defiant

#### **Beyond Darkness**

Beyond crescent moon  
Stars illuminate our souls  
Darkness finds the light

## **Cool Change**

There is a shady gray sky  
Sailing above the Cafe  
And a sympathetic breeze  
Dances across the tabletops

As the liberating cool change diffuses  
The morning's explosive heatwave



### **Tanka (3)**

#### **An Unseeded Renewal**

Sunflowers of peace  
We have not forgotten you  
The war has not stopped  
Killing fields are still on fire  
Young stems need help to survive

#### **A Dishonoured Land**

Today, time decreed  
Nature's enslaved angry storm  
Be discharged upon  
The unsympathetic world  
To cleanse the dishonoured land

#### **Please Let Them Grow**

Ravages of war  
Shall not weary their progress  
United they stand  
Strong and resilient they grow  
Let the earth be their witness

## **Time In A Turbulent Sea**

My time, weeks, days, and hours have gone  
My time, between one procedure and the next  
Time to explore this healing castle  
Time to write about realities and dreams  
Time to chat to eager listeners  
Time to observe the people living within  
Time to think about the world's problems  
Time to visualise pictures of tomorrow  
I am not a patient in his bed  
I am free-standing and waiting instead  
I am a walking and talking local poet  
I am not allowed to vacate the site  
They want me near, to study my plight  
They want me here, to secure my bed  
They need me near, to look into my mind  
They need me here, so I am easy to find

## **The World's Fractured Mirror**

At the close of day  
Sunset's empty amphitheatre  
Descends into a twilight tone  
And semidarkness  
Oppresses the horizon's  
Endangered vanishing point

What loiters beyond  
The skylines diminishing aurora?  
Will the night-fires of war  
Continue to be entrapped  
For ever and ever, inside  
The world's fractured mirror

## **Embedded**

No more highs and lows  
Nor ups and downs  
The roller coaster wheels  
Have sadly departed  
From their weary axles  
And the embedded tracks  
Now rest underneath  
Dried leaves and fallen branches

## **Words (an Acrostic Poem)**

Wandering along this winding road  
Over hallowed hills carrying my ethereal load  
Rivers of tears overflowed into the sea  
Disheartened, but encouraged by the prevailing breeze  
Secretly, I keep sailing toward her sacred tree

## **I'm A Dreamer (Revised)**

I am here on a hospital bed, life's not quite right  
Today's window, is out of sight  
I sense that the sun did rise and the day is now alight  
Answering the sky, I'm a dreamer of the night  
Morning thoughts of the day ahead, within this quiet

I could be in the park, flying my orange kite  
Under a cool verandah, riding my silver bike  
On the surf beach, cleansing myself of this blight  
Lying on warm sand, sunbathing my body beyond white  
Reality strikes, I'm here waiting for the next test's bite

## **Let Us Grow (a Memento)**

The flowers still stand tall and strong

After the ghastly storm

Not long

They cry, before the bees do swarm

All day they hum their song

Perform

And remain a unified team

Work together they say

And beam

Enjoy our colourful display

Retain us in your dreams

Always

## **Birds on Wires**

Weary gray clouds  
Lay anchored in the sky  
Moist air hangs breathless  
Not a wisp to disperse the flies  
And an anxious sweaty dampness  
Clings to everything

Birds on wires sit motionless  
Waiting for a thermal updraft  
To lift them beyond this world of smallness  
Where greed and senseless wars  
Remain the leader's primary craft



## **Becalmed Without an Alibi**

Time to unshackle my inflatable raft

And reignite my charred draft

I left floating down the river

When I was the disabled driver

Of my *Itmims* space craft

Sadly, the fuel tank is running on empty

And the secondhand battery is almost dry

I need to recharge my world beyond page twenty

And being becalmed is not an imaginative alibi

*Itmims; Ivor's Time Machine In Micro Space*

### **Tanka (3)**

#### **The World's Crimes**

One line at a time  
We shall persistently climb  
Above the world's crimes  
That bears no reason or rhyme  
For making the peace bells chime

#### **Infusion**

Nature inspires us  
mere mortals, through the bad times  
live on and enjoy  
times of preordained sunshine  
that infuse our cracks with light

#### **I'm a Walrus**

I am not insane  
I have lost myself in pain  
I know I'ts not time  
I have the will to survive  
I'm a walrus goo goo g'joob

## **Birds Under Trees**

Below the wavering clouds

Nature's noble trees

Become the birds shrouds

And the world's true trustees

There, under the sheltering steeples

The earth is their sacred temple

## **Forked Tongues**

War clouds cover the sun  
The wind hums through dead leaves  
They're talking in tongues

Beach sand is on the run  
The waves sharply rise and cry  
They're talking in tongues

Moon shadows are left undone  
Their white light hides under trees  
And they're talking in tongues

The new dawn has begun  
Sunrise greets everyone  
But we're talking in tongues

## **Birds Walking**

Who would need wings  
If the ground was safe all year long  
A level field for the world's bird songs

No gas filled trenches  
No bombs dropping from the sky  
No fallen angels waving goodbye

## **Birds in Flight**

Our spirit birds sleep all night  
Then emanate at first light  
To resume their dedicated flights

Our watchtower sentinels of Mother Earth  
Who sacredly ascend at first light  
Forever in flight, since nature's worldly birth

## **Magpies and Butterflies**

Our sad solar eye  
Is Hiding behind a misty sky  
Why do you cry?

The golden age did not die  
Nor are we waving goodbye  
Despite the state of our pigsty  
Verbal bullshit deeper than knee-high

One day soon, we will try  
To become nature's ally  
Turn ourselves into the good guys  
With clip-on clean green bow-ties  
Then, save our magpies and butterflies

## **Haiku (4)**

### **Waterfall**

Past the urban sprawl  
There is a gentle cascade  
Scenic Buckleys Falls

### **Walkie**

To explore his patch  
He happily trots away  
He then prances back

### **Nature Remembers**

The red lily blooms  
In February each year  
Memories of you

### **Alexander**

Where do you go to?  
My Alexander beetle  
Striding so calmly



## **Shadows Fall (a Musette)**

Don't stop

Do not look back

Leaves drop

Shadows

Do not create

Meadows

Walk tall

Don't look beyond

Nightfall

## **A Fractured Birdbath**

I have been staggering  
Sometimes stumbling  
Beneath the hard rain  
but I see no soft puddles  
on my cobblestone path

My empty matchbox raft  
Is snagged in my tubs gurgling drain  
And inside the yard's fractured birdbath  
only charred snow flakes  
and a dry feather-sponge remain  
to soothe my back pain

## **A Sapphire Blue Canopy**

Above the shimmering horizon  
Daylight's glow resolutely grows  
Like a rising ocean tide  
Strutting over hot sand

The sunrise swaggers  
Up through the clouds  
Brilliantly vapourizing  
Their hypnotic silver linings  
And gradually exposing the sky's  
Sapphire blue canopy

## **Birds on Fences**

What side of the fence  
do you sit on?  
Birds perched on fences  
look down on the earth

The grass is not always greener  
on the other side  
Is there ever  
a winning side  
or a losing side

Worms burrow holes  
on both sides  
Shadows grow longer  
under the one sun  
Dawn rises on the dark side  
and the sun sets on the bright side

Birds on fences know  
that the mystery of the universe  
can be seen in a blade of grass

## **The Odds and Ends, I send**

Our head reaches for the clouds  
But our heart forgets to speak aloud

We are all little fish in a big sea  
Swimming below the atmosphere  
Created by nature's life giving trees

Not all rocks  
Are not just rocks  
Some old rocks  
When you study their socks  
And listen to their knees knock  
They "Have rocked around the clock"

## **The Time-Machine's Secret Code (Revised)**

I'm no stranger to this land  
The warm hourglass sand  
Is drifting past my hand  
I'm no stranger to this room  
Time has me back here too soon  
I've yet to go on my trip to the moon  
I'm no stranger to this road  
Time has me carrying destiny's load  
I'm here after my latest episode  
I wait for a new download  
From the time-machine's secret code  
I'm no stranger to this hospital door  
Again, I'm grounded in ward four  
But I will beat this unheralded war  
And the nurses will say hello, and goodbye Ivor

## **We Are the Carrier Pigeons**

Are our Sunflowers wilting?  
Can they survive, prosper, and regrow?  
They will need more  
Genuine assistance  
Our promissory words  
And tuneless birdsongs  
Are not enough

We cannot forget them  
We all need to speak up  
Let our world of voices be heard  
Draft a poem, a letter  
Of protest, today, tomorrow  
We are the carrier pigeons  
May our messages for peace  
Chime over the people of Russia

## **Dust In My Eye**

I felt gravity's pressure drop  
When I noticed time had stopped

There, beyond our gray sky  
Sunlight was beginning to die

Is Doomsday plunging into our sty?  
Or, has future's dust inhabited my eye



## Alexander Beetle Sensed the Crime

A crazy Autumn afternoon  
Do not call me lazy  
I am gazing at a silver moon  
Has my finale night  
resumed too soon?  
My table  
has been set without a spoon  
Have I misread the event's tune?

A sundial chimes the time  
Have I misaligned the rhyme?  
My friend  
Alexander beetle sensed the crime  
and memorized my vanishing mime  
then stoically marched-in-time  
Away  
from the phenomenon's unlyrical lines

## **A Beetle Called Bertha**

I tip-toe among the little critters  
That wriggle and flutter  
Along our shared grassy track  
They like to stop and have a chat  
And proudly pose for a photo  
When I am on my tummy down low

Today I met a beetle called Bertha  
A lady who was frank and earthy  
And like my grandma, her family came first  
She protected her offspring through every cloudburst  
And I seriously agreed with the lady beetle  
That little critter's mothers were not unlike people

## **Twilight's Bookends**

The soft clouds have finished cruising  
above the prismatic horizon

The sky's golden curtain descends  
upon twilight's fathomless bookends

There, behind the world's flickering drapes  
the starry, starry universe awaits