



We Had Our
Best Discussions
in the Bathtub

Selected Poetry by
Dean Davies

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Discussions In The
Bathtub**

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By

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For my daughter, Caitlyn,
who, in a very dark time, called out to me in the
abyss.
And I stood up and lived.

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Preface

“Why would anyone want to publish a book of poetry?” I ask. Certainly not for money. I care little for personal fame. So why the urge to publish?

I am sixty-two years old, and if I am lucky, shall last another twenty years. Then the great circle of life shall close, and I shall pass like all other mortals before me. No one will care, except for a handful of family and friends. Depending on the point of view, the “He-was-a-great-man,” or “He-was-a-bastard” speeches shall be duly delivered, and life will move on, as it should.

I do not anticipate my poetry will ascend to Shakespeare’s heights in the public mind. And I don’t care if it does or doesn’t. But I do want to have my say. As we plunge deeper and more deeply yet, into what I consider a dehumanizing technological and corporate abyss, poetry, and literature in general, play an increasingly important role in balancing the robotic, bar-coded, cubicle-life of our “bottom-line” culture, with the great universal themes of human

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existence: birth, death, love, war, and the unutterable importance of our choices. God forbid U Tube should become the principal chronicle of the twenty-first century.

Ten years ago, when I studied for a Ph.D., a member of the graduate faculty declared, “There are no universals.” What he said was bullshit then, and it is bullshit now.

The great passages of life, and their attendant trials, are as firmly fixed in the architecture of the human spirit, as muscles are to bones. No other of the “lettered” art forms reverberate so profoundly, so deeply, with the resonances of human experience and yearning as does poetry.

I want my passage marked by something. I want my daughter to have “something” that sprang from the deepest mythic parts of her father as he made slow passage through the choppy seas of his own time. It is probably the only real description of who I was, what I felt, and thought, and perhaps, perhaps, a comment on the truly valuable in human existence.

Not While the Fire Lasts

Not while the fire lasts
Or wind upon the winter leaps
Or voices word-arrows cast
Shall deep magic sleep.

Come, come, you Old Ones
Of deep, deep age.
Teach me again
The litany
Of all that was
And shall be.

The First Full Moon

'Tis midnight of the first full moon,
My deep sleeping soul turns and moans.
Bone-roots, listening, hear
The throbbing of the moon.
The Old Ones come again,
'Tis time! The time draws near!

My candle gleams,
Some One calls my name—
In ancient, guttural tongue—
I do not fear,
My people come.

The marrow moves; the wind is in the room,
Out here! Here!
And I come before
My ancestors and my gods
Weeping, ashamed,
For I have forgotten the litany
Of the rising of the moon.

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