

Poetry Series

**Paula M. Puddephatt**  
**- poems -**

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# Paula M. Puddephatt()

I was born in Berkshire, UK and now live in Hampshire, UK.

# Almost Safe

Almost safe inside my sanctuary -  
it's not that I'm afraid of solitude.  
Yes, there is loneliness, but why delude  
myself? In my heart, I must stay wary.

People will hurt you once your guard is down.  
Hurt upon hurt - it gets hard to repair.  
Still, I find that, in the end, I do care.  
With no lifebelt, I fear that I might drown.

I just don't know the answers any more -  
as if I ever did. Does anyone?  
Select a star to make a wish upon.  
Remember not to double-lock the door.

I thought that I'd be safe here but I'm not.  
I sense the final chapters in 'their' plot.

Paula M. Puddephatt

# Attachment And Obsession

She said: 'Don't let them get inside your mind.'  
I heard her words that way. Now she's inside  
herself, and my reality's defined  
by my interpretation, and I slide

from sanity to madness. Yet, I know  
sometimes they're meant to be there, after all.  
I give and damn, and need to let it show.  
I've been there, when they watch you - let you fall -

and even push you, knowing what they do.  
She shared her feelings. It was not advice  
as such. She just found words I could relate to -  
formed poetry that gripped me in its vice.

I get attached - even obsessed. So what?  
At least I don't leave my own friends to rot.

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# Barbed Wire

If false floors and trap doors,  
and those fences of barbed wire,  
could not keep me away -

simply let me know how  
unwanted, unneeded I am -  
and hope that eventually  
that might drive me away.

But I'll never stop caring,  
and this pain that I'm bearing  
is my privilege, a blessing,  
like barbed wire caressing my soul.

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# Before I

before I return the childhood memories  
to their dusty  
attic box  
maybe I will write my  
initials in the dust  
just to let you know  
PP woz ere

before I close the classroom  
door once more  
close not slam the door  
this time around  
since I am an adult now  
and have no need any more  
for slamming doors

but before I leave the  
distant past  
behind this time  
I shall take one final backward glance  
take a moment  
to light a candle  
in my mind  
for two old friends  
both of whom were  
gone too soon

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# Carousel

around and around  
on the carousel  
spinning  
around and around  
merry-go-round  
multi-coloured dreams  
vibrant darkness  
the colours of confusion  
around and around  
the endless circles  
cycles  
horses longing for  
the wild  
longing to run  
far away  
leave this fairground ride  
of psychedelic craziness  
behind  
to feel their manes caressing the wind  
their spirits embracing the speed  
the freedom  
around and around  
endless cycles  
on the carousel of dreams

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# Conclusion

The ravens in my mind are dying.  
The people in my world are lying.  
Nothing's for real - but scarlet on steel.  
I'll endure the pain, until I can feel  
nothing more -  
just my broken body, on a cold, concrete floor.  
I will escape - some day, somehow.  
Yet, all my heart knows is the here and now -  
and how much it hurts -  
how nothing converts  
into usable currency,  
and this world has no place for me - not currently,  
not ever.  
It's coming together:  
the too obvious fact that I need a solution,  
a conclusion:  
an end to it all.

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# Confused And Broken

Can't analyse the type of love I feel  
when all I want to do is scream: 'Don't die.'  
It's not like Cancer. It just seems unreal -  
and, even though, sure, I've been close myself, why

would I want to understand this? Yet, I do -  
but won't accept that suicide's okay.  
But, if it is, should I go that way, too?  
Because you just won't see another way,

and I just can't face living without you.

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# Display

Ebony darkness  
weaves her own melodies  
into the silent sky.

Beautiful memories  
light up the darkness,  
each one exploding, like a firework -  
each one, duly expiring.

Then those final colours fade,  
as the display draws to a close -

leaving me wondering,  
in the empty aftermath  
of calm skies:  
Wasn't it all just an  
exquisite illusion?  
Is anything real?

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# Distraction

She grabs at each distraction,  
in the hope that she might find  
something that can ease the pain,  
and fill her heart and mind.

She tries to shut out her emotions,  
instructing her imagination,  
to leave well alone:  
select another destination.

It's as if she's going crazy -  
and she's trying to let go,  
and be reasonable and rational,  
and not to let her feelings show -

and so she grabs at each distraction,  
hoping.

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# Dreams And Illusions

coloured lights  
swirling  
through her mind  
tonight  
splashes of vibrant  
paint upon the night sky  
upon a canvas of ebony  
a night filled with dreams and illusions  
which dissolve into  
darkness  
pure darkness and delusions  
obsessions and confusion  
swirling whirling  
coloured lights  
that dance through her mind  
tonight

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# Eternal

I draw their spirits close to me and breathe,  
and still I find, there's something to believe.  
I need their energies to make me strong.  
I hear the subtle echoes: Samhain's song.

Nobody feels my reason - hears my rhyme.  
My rhythms only work in my own time.  
My words - they might make sense in my own mind.  
My friends need other words - ones I can't find.

There is an angel buried somewhere near,  
who told me that there's nothing left to fear.  
Now, all my friends who've passed or gone away -  
this is one life. What more is there to say?

In this one life, I'll mend what I can mend.  
True friendship is eternal - has no end.

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# Final Spin

You trust. You hurt. I know the score, so why  
do I let myself care? Why do I try  
at all? Must my emotions always win?  
By now, I must be on my final spin.

I cannot survive much more rejection.  
Take it all - my genuine affection -  
but just don't chuck it straight back in my face.  
I wish that I could hold back, just in case

I end up hurt again. I wanted to.  
Yet, still I trust - because it's what I do.  
I live. I learn. What difference does that make?  
Another fragment of my heart will break

each time, until I have no heart at all.  
Then, I'll get to hide at last - behind my self-erected wall.

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# For Rhiannon

oh beloved Rhiannon  
know the rhythm  
of my jaded heart

as sapphire skies  
dissolve into ebony  
and stars dance

and I stare  
almost trance-like  
at the near-full moon  
and she is you

and you  
cradle a baby  
your baby boy  
your son, Rhiannon

Rhiannon, beloved Rhiannon  
understand me

hear me  
heal me  
teach me  
love me  
save me  
I am going crazy

and your humility  
humbles me  
and your spirit  
astounds me

and tonight I pray to you  
beautiful goddess  
I pray to you

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# From The East Wing

beyond those gates  
and a drive that sometimes feels  
as though  
it will never end  
that twists and turns  
through trees  
more trees

beyond red rhododendron bushes  
lies the house  
vast, secretive, imposing  
Manderley

and here  
in the east wing  
our bedroom  
overlooking the rose gardens  
so peaceful  
tranquil  
and from here  
one cannot hear the sea

I do not think of  
the west wing  
her bedroom  
their bedroom  
the softness of her silk nightdress  
white sand  
rocks  
the crashing waves  
a cottage in the cove

from here  
one cannot smell the salt wind  
cannot see or hear the sea

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# Harsh Lessons

The world is no less beautiful,  
but life has taught her  
harsh lessons - and some days,  
it feels almost impossible  
for her to trust  
another human being.  
Yet, the changing skies,  
throughout these days  
and nights of sorrow,  
still make her feel  
something. More than merely numb.  
Cold winds can remind her  
that she's still  
alive: a real person,  
in spite of how  
she has often been -  
and is still - treated.  
Nature has her own  
form of harshness:  
moments of apparent  
cruelty, to rival  
that of the human race,  
and she too knows  
how to cause  
devastation.  
Yet, Nature is not  
sadistic and manipulative,  
not in the same gratuitous way.  
The trees, and every creature, great and small -  
all are as beautiful  
as they ever were -  
and even though she still  
feels like  
letting go,  
she doesn't.  
And she still cares about  
the other people too,  
even the ones  
who have hurt

and rejected her,  
and possibly always will.  
She thinks about,  
worries about them -  
wishes them well every day.  
Maybe sometimes,  
some of them  
even think of her as well,  
and hope that she's okay.

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# High On Life

when skies shine like topaz  
and there's blossom on the trees  
and a slight breeze  
and you're watching some magpies take flight

when the world is so vibrant  
and your heart is so light  
and just for a moment  
you're feeling all right

people might believe  
you need alcohol  
or drugs  
or religion  
or to fall  
insanely in love  
with somebody

but no other 'high' can match  
simply  
high on life  
in those moments  
sweet and brief  
pure and innocent  
no-one's mind games can  
touch you  
no-one has the power  
to break or destroy you

you just want to bottle  
the feeling  
but you can't  
and it's so sad  
because it won't last  
and you know  
it won't last  
it can't last

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# Imperfect Expressions

you'll find me burning  
multi-coloured candles  
in my mind

immersed in moonlight

and desperately hoping  
that my  
words - straight from the heart -  
are heard

my imperfect expressions  
of devotion  
Rhiannon

my persistent  
passionate pleas  
for your  
divine blessings

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# La Mouette

bored with her London self and life  
with the role of dutiful  
mother and wife

a fugitive  
she arrives in Cornwall  
at Navron  
the family estate

seeking to escape  
from that other life  
that other Dona  
the masquerade  
that was no life at all

and the peace  
that she craves  
she finds it here  
and yet  
is it really the peace  
that she seeks  
or adventure  
passion  
danger  
love

an enchanted creek  
pirate ship  
Frenchman - fugitive - kindred spirit  
an artist - sketching a heron  
La Mouette  
adventure  
passion  
danger  
and love

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# Love Wasted

Her maternal love was wasted.  
No-one hears her when she cries  
through the night for her lost babies,  
and a life so full of lies.

They assume it doesn't matter,  
and don't care much anyway.  
Her landscape desolate, barren, bleak -  
still, she endures each pointless day.

She clung to hope, but was deluded -  
and yet, had so much love to give.  
One final haemorrhage seals the deal:  
bittersweet release - no reason left for her to live.

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# Mary And The Horse Thief

I could be said to be  
falling in love  
with a horse thief,  
in spite of myself.  
Yet, I don't - won't - refuse to - call it  
'falling in love'.  
I am simply a woman,  
and he is a man,  
and something inside of me  
is responding to something  
about the man.  
That is all.  
And I try to ignore  
the fact that his hands  
are just like his brother's -  
the hands of a murderer.  
The hands of a murderer.

Seventeen years:  
That's how long  
my mother spent  
as a widow.  
Our little farm in Helford -  
it was the only life  
that I had ever known.  
But the crops were failing;  
the animals were dying.  
When we buried Nell, the faithful old mare,  
I watched  
steel turn into shattering china,  
before my young eyes:  
witnessed my mother's first,  
last and only  
serious illness -  
nursed her through  
her final days -  
reluctantly promising...

And so the promise - to go to my aunt.

I honoured my word.

And the moors,  
so bleak and wild -  
the landscape fills me with  
a twisted, distorted  
form of love.  
So unlike my love, so pure,  
for the river - for Helford - for  
my people. My home.

And there it stands:  
grey, solitary,  
sinister and secretive,  
the inn that bars its doors  
to passing travellers -  
not that many would wish,  
or dare...

Yes, I could be said  
to be falling in love  
with my horse thief,  
but I choose  
to use  
different words  
instead.

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# Memories

The happy memories  
make me cry the most.

Such memories are often  
obscured  
by the shadows  
of sad recollections,  
which outnumber  
and constantly surround them.  
They never leave me.

Yet, it's strangely comforting  
to realise  
that the happy memories  
have more power,  
and that these will always  
make me cry the most.

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# Moving On

One day, when you've moved on too,  
and I'm part of your history -  
because, in the end, they always do -  
will you think of me?

I'm too intense. It scares people away.  
That's their excuse.  
They just don't bother - do not want to stay.  
You can't make them, and so it's no real use

to beg or cry, or even calmly tell  
them just how much you care.  
You must not scream, and must not yell  
that it's not bloody fair.

It isn't, though - but tell me:  
When you've moved on too,  
will I be ancient history  
to you,  
and will you remember that I said

that I'll never forget about you?  
That when I tell you that I care - it's true.

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# My Cousin Rachel

Orphaned as a small child -  
raised by my elder cousin, Ambrose -  
secure together, in our 'house of men' -  
Ambrose, my cousin -  
yet, father, mother, brother -  
Ambrose was all. My world.

They used to hang men at Four Turnings  
in the old days.  
Not any more, though.  
I was seven, when  
Ambrose showed me  
the hanging body of a man.  
The man's name was Tom Jenkyn.  
He used to sell lobsters.  
He murdered his wife,  
and for his crime,  
Tom Jenkyn hung.

Our damp Cornish winters  
did not agree with Ambrose,  
necessitating travel -  
winters to be spent on the Continent.  
And in Florence,  
in his forties,  
that what where, and when, he met  
the Countess Sangalletti -  
My Cousin Rachel.  
She apparently shared his love of gardening.  
Then came the letter,  
announcing that  
Ambrose and My Cousin Rachel  
were married.  
I had not know such jealousy -  
such intense jealousy - before.

And so few letters.  
And when they came...

And that journey to Florence -  
and the churches -  
and the haunting face  
of a beggar woman.

The sudden shock -  
the news of  
Ambrose's death.

And the villa -  
and the fountain -  
boy holding a shell -  
the laburnum trees -  
the unreality of that foreign land.

And, back at home, the hatred  
that grew -  
of a Rachel  
who never existed -  
and the love  
for a Rachel  
who - did that one exist?

Sunday lunches  
with the Kendalls and Pascoes -  
and My Cousin Rachel.  
Especially, that first one.  
Especially, the last.

And Rainaldi - hated by Ambrose,  
hated by me.  
Regarded by My Cousin Rachel as  
friend, confidante -  
maybe lover, as well?

And the pearls -  
around Rachel's white neck -  
and a wedding -  
my marriage to Rachel -  
a wedding  
that never took place.

And my own illness.  
And - was Rachel innocent?  
Was Rachel guilty?

An evening walk  
in the terraced garden.  
A warning, not heeded.

The image of a granite slab -  
a pocket book -  
letter from Ambrose - buried,  
along with the pocket book.

They used to hang men at Four Turnings  
in the old days.  
Not any more, though.

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# New Start

how do I feel  
really feel  
about a new start  
healing my spirit  
piecing together the shards of my heart

even though inside I am falling apart  
lost  
tossed aside

my dreams  
I want to give them away  
every one  
to the highest bidder  
lowest bidder  
any random bidder

I would like to throw them  
item by item  
from an apartment window  
let the wind take them  
let the wind carry this pain  
away

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# No Reverse

And even now - I can't believe it,  
but the potential's there -  
that someone else could get inside my mind,  
and make me care.

It's lonely work to always be  
the one who gives a damn -  
the one whom they reject - eject.  
So, do they think I am

unbreakable? Or just entirely worthless?  
I cannot tell -  
but people take me for a fool,  
and make my life pure hell.

I give my all, for what that's worth -  
but caring too much is a curse.  
It will destroy me in the end:  
Start - stop - fast forward - no reverse.

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# Obsession's Dance

She bleeds dark secrets. There is no way back.  
She doesn't want to find one, anyway.  
The pressure is intense. She starts to crack.  
Somehow, she makes it through another day.  
She talks small talk. They think that she is fine,  
and mostly, can't be bothered if she's not.  
She knew the score and where to draw the line,  
but didn't see it coming: perfect shot -  
right on target. She didn't stand a chance.  
Soon, so soon - already in too deep -  
intoxicated by obsession's dance.  
The night possesses her. By day, she'll sleep.

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# Only The Horse

There was an eclipse,  
and a violent storm, on the afternoon  
that Lucy Lightfoot disappeared.  
Only Lucy's horse ever saw  
the white light,  
as lightning struck the steeple  
of the little church.  
He was tethered  
to the rusty gate -  
and, of course, the poor animal was afraid.  
Lucy was inside the church -  
by her lover's side.  
Her lover - from a former life.  
She had visited his tomb  
each day since she was twelve,  
presenting flowers, whispering secrets  
and words of passion,  
to his wooden effigy.  
She must have realised  
that the time was right,  
that she and her valiant soldier  
would finally reunite.  
But only the horse ever saw  
the white light -  
and no trace of Lucy Lightfoot  
was found, beyond that afternoon.

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# Pastel Shades

Hope sometimes comes to us  
in pastel shades.  
It isn't always  
either  
black or white,  
or even grey.  
I feel that hope,  
when needed most,  
will often be  
revealed in  
pastel shades.

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# Persephone

It seemed a very heavy price to pay -  
for seven pomegranate seeds, consumed.  
Half of every year,  
to be spent here, in the land of the dead.  
Yet, the post of 'Queen of Underworld'  
is underrated,  
and you should see Hades when he burns with lust.  
He wants me to move here, full-time.  
Why should I?  
Divided between two worlds -  
awaited, yearned for, at both ends.  
I have grown to love it.

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# Scarlet

scarlet the droplets  
an arm begins to bleed  
to steadily bleed  
like the soul  
of someone in pain  
of someone in pain  
day after excruciating day

bleeding scarlet tears  
my eyes  
and now the skies too  
bleed their scarlet raindrops  
the tears of the gods  
in pain  
such pain  
day after day

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# See Me Through

And if fresh fantasies might see me through,  
and give my world a lighter, brighter shade or hue -  
must we still question what the mind can do,  
or simply accept that, here and now, I write these words for you?

In my eternal darkness, I remain.  
Yet, if I feel your spirit's light, then why complain?  
There is some melody, even in pain,  
  
and it's enough - that you can make me smile again.

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# Spiritual Peace

I find my place of spiritual peace  
Again, just when I feel I never will.  
There is a sense of freedom and release.  
I can't know all the answers, but am still

In touch with The Divine, and that is real.  
We're all connected. Life is precious, and  
Life doesn't end with death. Sometimes we feel  
A presence, and we come to understand

That nobody who's ever been has gone.  
The spirits of the ones we've loved remain.  
They will protect us - help us to go on.  
There is almost a beauty in the pain.

Although sometimes I find it hard to trust,  
Truth's constant. Feel the patterns in the rust.

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# Star

so in control  
or seemingly so  
a ballerina  
executing  
another perfect  
pirouette  
perfected through  
repeated practice  
flawless  
like her  
still baby-soft skin

no-one apparently noticing  
that those hollow cheekbones  
are tear-stained  
again

blonde anorexic  
so young  
too young  
sweet and glamorous

another falling angel  
and crying  
again

her true beauty  
her essence  
she hides  
inside  
her secret inner space  
where she is herself  
authentic  
perfect in her very imperfection  
a star

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# The Legend Of Lucy Lightfoot

At seventeen, so radiant,  
hair raven black, eyes emerald green -  
the local lads, they just don't stand a chance.  
Lucy's heart is in the village church -  
the love of her life, a wooden effigy,  
of a soldier who died long ago,  
before Lucy's birth.

She has visited the tomb  
every day since she was twelve.  
She brings her lover flowers,  
tells him details of  
her daily life:  
living on a local farm,  
with her father and two brothers.

Then, one day, Lucy is riding  
her beloved white horse,  
in the direction of the little church.  
She gets caught in a storm,  
so fierce. The skies turn black.  
She must reach the church,  
her sanctuary from the violence  
of the elements.  
She tethers her terrified horse  
to the rusty gate,  
and soon she is safe, with her lover again.

Lucy's horse was later discovered,  
frightened and alone.  
But where did Lucy go?  
No trace of Lucy Lightfoot was ever found -  
although...

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# Three Years

How did she know obsessions that are mine?  
The ones I hadn't even formed back then?  
Could she tell whom I was to meet and when?  
I'm with her - on sanity's borderline.

Three years have passed. It feels like yesterday,  
or else three hundred years ago instead.  
She didn't need more people in her head,  
knowing that all too soon, they'd go away.

What would have happened if she hadn't died?  
Would she have left, or would it have been me?  
She knew how these things always have to be -  
that certain issues can't be rectified.

Three years, since I first felt my engine stall.  
Three years, and I've still not moved on at all.

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# Time

Time moves on, not caring  
who enters or leaves our lives.  
It's been two years now  
since you died.  
Time drifts on, regardless -  
and each fresh sorrow  
leaves its scars.  
One season dissolves into  
the next -  
one year becoming yet another.  
The happy moments will continue  
to come  
and go,  
as time moves on -  
mechanically,  
not really caring  
who enters or leaves  
our insignificant lives.

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# Trust

Trust, so pure -  
it can be broken -  
shattered.

Words that cause deep hurt  
can be forgiven, but - once said -  
such words can never be  
unspoken.

The threads that hold  
us together  
in this life  
are as fragile  
as they are precious,  
and irreplaceable.

Trust, so pure -  
it can be broken  
in a moment,  
having taken weeks, months,  
years,  
or a lifetime,  
to form.

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# Where Are You?

I shut the world out,  
but not you, until  
maybe in the end, I did -  
but, still -  
you know that, at that particular time,  
I let you in, and only you.  
The story's end just leaves me stunned.  
What can I do?  
Where are you? You're still around, right?

I know that you're not really gone,  
but I can't feel you any more.  
Why can't I feel you, like I did?  
I have this useless store  
inside my head - the thoughts,  
emotions - ones I want to share  
with you. Your spirit's disconnecting.  
I can't feel you anywhere.  
It scares me. Don't you understand?  
I need you. I need you here.  
My living friends abandon me,  
but always, you stayed near.  
Where are you? Are you leaving, too? I'm scared.

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