

An East German Town in the 1990s

Once the grey was dominant,
The all-consuming bleakness reigned supreme.
Dejected people with outlook to match
Were seen to wend their weary way -
And then a miracle!
The throw of the dice changed and
The hateful barrier began
To disintegrate little by little
When freedom fought a path towards the light
The colours returned.
What a gift to old and saddened eyes
Where colour hid in a long-forgotten memory
Who for so long had seen only sadness
But now a blaze of cream and yellow came
And with it – new life.

Madness

The cellar is my refuge,
It is my prison too.
I spend the days and nights here
Despair is nothing new.

The cold and damp surround me,
I pull my blanket tight.
The guttering candle flickers
And soon I'll have no light.

My daughter has stopped crying
And now has fitful sleep,
I try so hard to join her
But my fear it runs too deep.

Noises in the distance
Another mortar shell,
As we lie here in terror
In this wicked living hell.

I cannot understand this,
Why punishment? What crime?
Why make our lives so awful?
We suffer all the time.

Why should we live in fear?
Our young men made to fight?
Because a greedy madman
Has engineered this plight.

The regime now in Russia,
This war is their misdeed.
And Putin is the ego freak
Who can't control his greed.

It's gaining land at any cost,
He won't change his position.
He'll lie and kill and maim for an
Illegal acquisition.

Our homes, careers and families
Have all but disappeared.
The happy lives we used to lead,
The very notion - weird?

Our teachers and our lawyers
Now brandishing a gun,
Who sadly must continue till
This evil war is won.

But we swear retribution
And plan, in better times,

To bring the scum to justice
They'll answer for their crimes.

But no one is the winner.
And death's on either side.
With rows of silent tombstones
Where mothers screamed and cried.

So in this crazy time
When life brings only sadness.
Where's the reason-ing for this?
It's madness, madness, madness.

Time

In life we're always looking at
A clock, or watch we wear.
We check our phones, we check our apps,
How long to get to there?
And as for journeys in a car
Or bus or train, we take.
We grumble till it does arrive?
It's late, for goodness' sake.
We tut and mutter when we think
Our trip will take more time
Than we had planned. In busy lives
Blood pressure starts to climb.
We curse the folk responsible
And think they're simply lazy
We're sure it shouldn't take that long,
Our memory somewhat hazy.
And when we're asked to do a task
We wish to just avoid.
'No time', is the excuse we give,
We're otherwise employed.
But everybody wants your time.
You have to share it out,

Your boss, your child, your friend, your spouse
And 'Time for me,' you shout.
But too much time is hell on earth
'Cause loneliness appears
But then, too little brings on stress
The breakdowns and the tears.
And if the balance isn't right,
We pay a heavy price,
Our health and then our happiness
Are all gone in a trice.
And when we're at the end of days
And life is running out,
Time becomes our enemy,
This truth beyond all doubt.
But I am grateful for my part
In life's rich tapestry,
Some things you win and some you lose
Yes, nothing comes for free.
So, when I ponder on my time
With all those passing years
The triumphs and the tragedies
The hopes and many fears.
A feeling overcomes me
A confidence sublime,
For I am grateful for my life
Time after Time.

Carolyn R. Bradley