



**"Seahorses and other miracles..." (From "Depths and Heights")**

Gerrard Chaiken

So often , you felt  
As if there were a stone around your neck,  
A stone in your heart,  
As if your heart itself were stone,  
And your broken-limbed body  
A stone upon stony ground.  
So often, you felt  
Wracked with pain,  
Hopes wrecked  
Upon a heartless uncaring  
World, whirling carelessly,  
Indifferently, remorselessly;  
And that you could not, in any way,  
Stumble on, crawl on- let alone walk  
Upon the unyielding ground.

But now: you wear  
A tiny silver sea-horse  
Crafted by some other hands  
Of one, who, too, had suffered  
The pain of re-birth,  
The pain of feeling  
Too much -or too little,  
The day-to day doubts,  
Unseen by an unseeing  
And seemingly  
Heartless world;

And once again, you wear a smile,  
Tentative as a newborn infant hope,  
Brazen as an all-knowing  
And victorious goddess;  
And fingering your filigree  
Dancing sea-horse, you say:  
"This is a miracle!"  
And, beloved, there are so many more!

**"Courting the Muse, 1." from "BeMuSingsings"**

Gerrard Chaiken

The Muse of Inspiration  
Is close at hand, ready to visit,  
Ready to energise us;  
But she wants to be welcomed:  
Her infinite energy wants  
Our definite intention:  
Her seeming flightiness  
And teasing flirtation  
Demands deliberation,  
Her artistry our articulation!  
Intent upon our intention,  
The Muse awaits faithful  
Promises, not promiscuous  
Or prodigal words, but  
A vow of Purpose...

**Sonnet of singing striving and strife...(From "BeMuSinging...")**

Gerrard Chaiken

There is a war of worlds within the worlds within,  
Whilst the sun shepherds the clouds to their fold of infinite space;  
The Muses clamour for my will to show its retiring face  
And behold dimensions I have not yet begun to imagine.  
Here, down below, sloth in subtle fugue finds subterfuge in 'sin';  
As in overbearing battles each distraction desires to win-  
Then in furtive but furious frenzied fight  
The warring factions put my fictions to frantic flight-  
But in the brazen silence, words spill and surge  
And whirl pooling re awaken that ancient urge  
And ditties dervish-dance from dead dirge  
Then do faculties' facilities in fantasia merge-  
Now, in fecund fountain flow of forms unfrozen-  
Reminding me of inspiration's freedom chosen....

**Holy face" (From "Depths and Heights")**

Gerrard Chaiken

There be no scars nor flaws upon the Holy Face;  
For subtle ironies, and paradoxes, no place-  
For inconsistencies, no room in Infinite Space;  
And yet, as my relative life does crawl and race  
At its intemperate, and erratic pace,

As after dreams and schemes I blindly chase,  
Stumbling and lurching, clumsy, and grace-  
Less, striving towards a hidden apex, from a base  
Perilously unsteady, frantically trying to brace  
Myself against the storms of suchness that interlace  
Reason's resolutions; yet, then, as I track and trace  
Truth, and see how before despairing doubt I debase  
Self, the greatest irony of all, raises its teasing face:  
Tis that so heedlessly I struggle, against Love's embrace.

**Gerrard Chaiken** was born in 1946 in Zimbabwe, from where he moved to Cape Town, the Mother city of South Africa. He studied languages art and philosophy at the University of Cape Town. Did Honours in English Literature, began a Masters on Virginia Woolf and abandoned it for personal reasons. Worked as a lecturer and teacher of English Literature, English as the second language, qualified as a professional librarian, and spent the bulk of his professional life as a Librarian, fulfilling his idea and ideal that libraries are, in a phrase used by the Ancient Egyptians, "the healing place of the soul". Poetry for him, is a realm of the True, Good, and beautiful, and is a reflection of these, as well as aspirational and inspirational, and is a force of great potency for aspects of our education and evolution.