

# This goes with that

Phillip Corbett

You can't be happy if you've never felt sad  
You can't be good if you've never been bad

You can't find peace if you've never been afraid  
You can't get rich if you never got paid

You can't be honest if you never told a lie  
You can't get an answer if you never asked why

You can't fall in love if you've never felt alone  
You can't hang up till you've picked up the phone

You can't be a winner if you haven't thrown the dice  
You can't be real if you're always so damn nice

You can't pull the trigger if you don't have a gun  
You can't go to heaven if you've never had some fun

You can't start running till you stand up on your feet  
You can't be a friend till you don't care who you meet

You can't be a hero if you've never run away  
You can't find salvation if you don't know how to pray

You can't escape from prison if you haven't found the key  
You can't be a sailor if you've never gone to sea

You can't be found if you haven't been lost  
You can't get rich if you still count the cost

You can't reach the top if you've never hit rock bottom  
You can't count your chickens if the fox already got 'em

You can't hear the music if you don't have time to listen  
You can't find true love if a part of you is missin'

You can't find your spirit till you learn to just let go  
You can't find true knowledge till you know you just don't know

You really learn a secret when you learn the truth in pain  
If you think the world's gone crazy

Then it just proves you are sane!

## The sea and the self — a poet's path to truth

I have been writing poetry since my mid-teens as a way of expressing my own inner observations and understandings of my life and the world around me and to investigate and describe what may be the hidden deeper truths that underlie the superficial appearances of things. My nature has always been one of deep enquiry and a sense of the mystical interconnection of all things. I grew up next to the sea in Newcastle and would wander along the beach alone on wintery days filled with the sense of power and vastness of the waves and the ocean before me. Years later I would return to the seaside for recuperation from a stressful time or in recovery from illness. I would swim out into the surf floating on my back feeling supported and suffused by the surrounding energy of the foamy seawater. I would repeat several times my own special invocation "Mother Sea, Mother Sea, heal me!" And you know, it always did, on all levels; physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

So poetry as a medium allows me to attempt to grasp and describe my experiences of the ungraspable and indescribable using such means as metaphor, simile and symbol. These can all contain diverse senses and meanings, often unique to each individual's own understanding. Such is the subjective nature of reality I believe. The Buddha is quoted as saying "The world rises and sets with the mind."

I regard psychodrama in many ways as a poetic method, all-inclusive in its content ranging from the concrete to the imaginary, surplus reality, always in the present but able to travel to the past and future, completely subjective to the protagonist's experience of living. The great gift of role reversal is that we can make the valiant attempt then as protagonists or auxiliaries to discover and better understand how the other experiences the world in their own unique way.

I recall fondly how Max Clayton used to say "What's the point of envying someone else's life? For all you know they may be going to hell in a handbasket!" In saying that, there is the clear sense that we almost always cannot know what the other person is truly experiencing in their own inner being unless we actually make the effort to reverse roles with them and then in that way, we may be able to fulfil as well as we can Max's other great loving dictum, "We can become companions to each other."

Max encouraged me to believe that it is possible to role reverse with anyone, no matter what! Such a huge step to actually allow oneself to attempt that. However, it reminded me of something my father, who was a font of wise sayings once quoted to me. This was the saying of a great early 20<sup>th</sup> century American physician and poet Oliver Wendell Holmes, who on seeing a condemned man being led to the gallows said, “There but for the grace of God go I!”. As I say in my poem “You can’t be a friend till you don’t care who you meet.”

I believe I could summarize the underlying message of my poem, consisting of fourteen rhyming couplets or aphorisms, as life has taught me that you can only learn about life by living it to the fullest extent: riding the highs and lows along the way as best you can, never giving up, trusting in the ultimate benevolence of fate, that in the end, one way or another, everything will be alright. But the seemingly unavoidable truth is that to get to heaven, self-realization or individuation as Jung called it first, you have to survive and learn from the trials and tribulations of hell, hubris or just plain stupidity!

As my good friend Christos Patty said to me recently, “Do you know what’s the antidote to Artificial Intelligence? Natural stupidity!”.



Phillip Corbett is from Newcastle, New South Wales and has a B.A. Honours in English, French and German literature, a Diploma of Education and a Bachelor of Applied Science in Chiropractic. He initially taught Special Education, Aboriginal Education and English as a second language in Sydney and Melbourne. He recently retired after working as a chiropractor for thirty-five years and lectured in the RMIT School of Chiropractic. Phillip has worked as a psychodramatist for ten years facilitating a group for people experiencing anxiety and depression. He was Chair of the Board of Directors at Little Yarra Steiner School where he also worked part time as a drama teacher, writing and directing student plays. He has performed as an actor up to semi-professional level for over 50 years. He translated and directed a German play at Northcote Amphitheatre and his original play *The Arsonist* was produced Off Broadway in New York in 2001. His favourite leisure activities include surfing, swimming, cycling, gardening, reading, watching movies, writing poetry and plays and getting together with his four children and six grandchildren.