

The Primrose Path

and other poems

by

Bob Taylor

Illustrations by Gladys Hobson

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This book is dedicated to my darling wife Linda.
In gratitude for all her patience and support, for putting up
with my idiosyncrasies, my bad temper, my chauvinism,
my sexism,
my laziness in matters of domestic chores, my tendency to
give her dyspepsia; and to whom I
give my undying love and devotion.

Bob

My thanks to Sheila who taught me 'no pain — no gain'.

Also to Gladys Hobson for beating me into submission in
order to produce this book
and
for the cover and illustrations.

And to Simon Hobson for preparing the book for printing.

Lament of the Old Soldier

My Muse has nowhere left to go,
Except the place where soft winds blow.
I don't remember winters there,
Perhaps she's taking greater care
And, thinking of my ancient bones,
She only seeks for lighter tones,
(Not the sirens — how *they* sounded!)
Yes, life back there seemed far more rounded.
Marriage vows bound us together
Until the day we died — forever!

.

We went to war with good intent,
Not realizing what it meant.
A winter here? Oh, no — that's swallowed
By the other things that followed;
The comradeship of men in plight
Ensures such memories have no bite.
We still have meetings, though we're now few,
And none of us prefer the new.
We reminisce on things we've done —
Tell tales of how we beat the Hun.

A haunting tune, 'Lily Marlene',
I whistled, softly, down country lane
When I returned to civvy life,
And took a stroll there with my wife.
My two boys, who were on her knee
When I went far across the sea,
Had quite grown up, and the youngest lad
Had no idea I was his dad.
Welcome home? 'Well, don't you dare
To sit in granddad's favourite chair!'

Ration books were still around,
Though things went further then, we found;
No need for shopping trolleys full.
And, yes, I know that this sounds dull,
But neighbours would pass teapots over
The garden wall to help each other;
And everyone on my whole street
Smiled at each other when they'd meet.
(My Muse, discordant things has found,
And colder winds begin to sound).

Did this younger generation,
Who vented lust to satiation,
Ever find a worthwhile goal?
They lived for Sex and Rock & Roll,
And pleased themselves, whether right or wrong,
Without paying The Piper for his song;
Left shattered families strewn around,
And few of them seem to have found
That there's a payment in the end.
The Piper always wins, my friend.



Bus Stop Conversation '64

I'm sorry, friend, but I am not
The kind of girl you think you've got,
For daddy's told me of *your* kind,
And I prefer a *loving* mind.

What's that I hear — you want to marry?
Oh, I'm afraid you'll have to tarry
Until we're well and truly wed —
You'll get it on our marriage bed!

And yes, I *am* a virgin still —
It's all a matter of the will.
Snigger all you like, and mock it,
But I don't *care* what's in your pocket!

A single peck upon my cheek
Is all you get from me this week —
For other things, you'll have to roam.
Goodnight, my friend — I'm going home!



Sefton Youth Club '58

Eyes that glare up at the ceiling;
Grunts and groans and bodies reeling;
Glossy muscles rippling tightly —
Nothing here is taken lightly.

Clanging weights from iron cast;
Repetitions — hope I last;
Straining backs on inclined benches.
What's it for? To please the wenches!

Walls that stream with condensation,
Crumbling from dilapidation,
Pale-green painted, cracked and peeling —
Subsidence there's no concealing.

Training's done, I hear the sound
Of Rock And Roll — the ceilings pound.
Tread the stairs to hear the band,
With a 7-Up bottle in my hand.

Swirling petticoats — who's that chick?
I guess I'd better move in quick!
'Subs' are due, old Skipper's here —
It's time for me to disappear ...



Magic Moments '58

'Magic Moments' I remember
From my youth in wintertime;
I think it was in late December
When snow flaked thickly to the ground
As Patricia's birthday party ended,
And from her home we brightly wended.

'Wake Up little Susie', too,
Was current then; perhaps the autumn?
Sue's daddy sang it, just for Sue —
His way of showing her affection.
Miners had an oblique fashion,
When displaying their paternal passion.

And me? I revelled in my new-found senses;
My black crêpe shirt and white sports coat;
But puberty brings consequences,
Which at the time seemed so remote.
The thrill, and knowing that I could
'Pull' pretty girls, felt really good.

It was the start of everything
That gives fulfilment of a kind;
But innocence comes to an ending
That leaves one with a troubled mind.
I sometimes wished I could have stayed
Forever in those halcyon days ...