Upending the Bottle

His passion from the world of crystals came
Knew Crick and Watson in their glorious time
And Rosalind – that dark and lonesome dame,
He even searched for her some husband prime!

That length of piano wire though mighty strong
With sudden snap will fail when strained too far
For gentle, staggered breakage wise men long -
Toughness not strength became his guiding star.

Through nature’s structures clear the answer sits
How stiff things and much softer things can fuse.
With long years’ toil he’d mastered composites
This father then could coach teams in their use.

To teach your mind on how this system worked
Just search your memories of him - you’ll see
Twixt sudden hard and soft his nature forked
With ruthless rigour showed great sympathy!

This man who’d rarely stand for ifs and buts
Vice Chancellor for Surrey graved his mark
Broke records and survived the deepest cuts
His lasting monument - their Research Park.

Those ruffled feathers of some top peacocks
Sadly denied the knighthood he deserved!
In old age he endured some savage knocks
But wit and penetrating mind preserved.

Ripening with age
Stuck on a shelf
Kept his vintage
But not himself!
A fresh crusade
He had each day
You to persuade
He’s had his say.
At heart benign,
This critic fierce
With tough design
To truth he’d pierce.

AK in memoriam