



## *Context of In Memoriam*

*By Marcus Lander (December 2021)*

This poem was written at the behest of a kind and elderly neighbour of ours who had recently lost a grandson unexpectedly in a car accident. Although I did not know the young man well, what I had seen of him impressed me that he was a good natured considerate fellow who took care of his grandmother, cleaning her windows and mowing her lawn. He even cut my lawn for me on at least one occasion, not for reward, but out of pure goodwill and generosity of spirit. His family have always been extremely good to us, and we consider ourselves fortunate to have such a lovely neighbour. I was therefore touched by the tragedy of the situation and was honoured when my neighbour asked me to write a few words for his funeral.

It is difficult to know what to say in such moments. The usual platitudes are wholly inadequate. The death of a loved one is a painful and difficult time even when the deceased lived a full life and reached a ripe old age and his or her passing was not unanticipated, yet in this case a youth in the prime of life, had been killed completely out of the blue, leaving behind a family who were understandably devastated by their loss.

The one consolation was that his funeral service was well attended, and hundreds of well-wishers turned up to pay their respects and give him a good send-off, so to speak. In a time of disruption caused by coronavirus, when so many events, including the funeral service of my own father, had had to be cancelled or curtailed this was at least a small mercy to be thankful for. Looking around at the assembled crowd and listening to the heart-felt tributes, I was impressed by the sheer number of lives this young man had touched in some way during his brief time on earth. So even though his life was cut short prematurely, one could still say that he had lived his life to the full.