

II : Unstable

Author's note

This poem was written in response to fears that the human genome project and human cloning would undermine our individual uniqueness. The answer is found in the poets of this poem.

unstable

(remembering Gödel's theory of unsolvable paradoxes and the current naivety of biology in solving man)

the triumph of death might be nearer
as the sorrowful millenium approaches
building pipsqueaks
which could solve the homeless,
playing it cool or hip
while surmountable problems
become insurmountable
here on christmas day
waiting in minneapolis hub
of all places
for our usual end of term ski
what better place for composition
and solving problems
although you too may be up to here
in personal odysseys

just as medicine now might look again
at individuals its old heresy
we come back into fashion
thus proving it depends
on where ones standing
DNA now gives us our position
on how we treat and backs
our old conceit of readjusting
but this I think last big attempt
at myth and art laced
with a scientific shepherds crook
might oscillate in rich contention
with words as music and the spheres
or pared to a crystal edge
sparing all beauty
and from its ruins new language
new realities appear

take snow
does it not show a water message
could be infinite
and bring to biology
the paradox of physics

for the quality of ourselves
is not definable
least of all by the poor objectives
of mathematics
it is that the analysis
as eliot put it
prevented my original feeling for the poem
being recaptured

the world is layered
but it could be the commonplace
the great surging everyday tide
of ordinary life
that contains felicity
not quantum or IT
or the antics of the rich
the tabloid horrors
or the academic twitch
but the wasteland of graffiti
and the dying estates
the nursing homes and diners
on the outskirts of cities
contain our aumenenses

certain are these horrors
even there golden lands exist
perhaps the beribboned
helmeted teutons of maximilien
or charles the fifth
flit through their imagination
wandering among the towns and villages
of the rhine and danube
before the late nightmare of germany
almost destroyed
a medieval renaissance
who knows what glories
ruminant in the bronx
or the terraces of wigan
they too can take their turn
among the streams and meadows of st. florien
hidden in the deep glades of olm
beneath the turretted castles
a prince in swadling clothes
grows among the foresters

it might be you
who bearing only the blue and golden ring
in this winter palace of cones and bells
attend the benedictines for the poor
they know the ring
and among rejoicing feasts
you ascend as king
and all this world must end
before our winters tale complete

the lightness of snow
is a complete thing
it changes the world benevonently
so bush and tree housetop and lane
radiate a frozen warmth
gives grace to the ungraceful
and all transport ascends
a noise of silence
still I see onegin on his way
to grotigeskia or somesuch
the heap of stone cold enchanted
the library so complete
sleigh ski langlauf
walking on its softness
the iceing sugar world
releases and controls
commands allegiance
and when a bird or stoat is spied
a hare or pheasant loiters
in the snow-filled field of avalon
it is places not yet known
where tenebrae still sung
and candles tapered one by one
in some cathedral of the rhine
or danube bent whose mitred towers
and castles on snowy crags
look down upon an ancient scene
preserved restored to some ancient task
now dwindling neath the modern chore
where is bohemia and her shore
the maggar and the old eloquence
their many endless fissures
torn to shreds
now covered by the snow

such is redemptive force
old millenium
but the faces and places
are unredeemable
can any scale weigh it
the passing memory of swann
and the duchess de guermantes
conjure the little gate
and the meséglise way
so we invent from our hall
on return to london
the helmingham way
or the framlingham way
to preserve still this island
of country scenes
where you may see the old world
made explicit
and even as the hurrying times
dishonour memory
we encompass it

but now late winter sun beguiles
the hibernating spirit
seeks a new reflection
waits for another language
subway or london hip
is camouflage
and we too hide
from the evocation
the genius of each brain
finally expressed
the secret key turned
looked for all our lives
that which is out of time
ourselves

that village or island
a far away coast
by this lake or mountain
among these hills these declivities
and gently folding fields
from your watchtower
the curving mass of spring
where shepherds stroll

is this still your paradise
some unrealised place
which you find upon return
faded in romance
has gone and all your tales
decomposed

an act of courage
the act itself
release the spar
of your obsession
the lifeboat waits

an afternoon in spring
my mother takes my hand
moving across the surrey sun
her breathing not so strong
and then the unbearable pity
of understanding her
loving her
knowing the long past shared
and mainly unexpressed
fills me with alarm
but still I know we will not say
what we feel
it cannot be said
this long long love
unshakeable
in vissicitude
but now in this point in time
in this point in space
seeing her on the garden seat
alone with her own thoughts
holding my hand in hers
we kiss

the pity of celan
seeing them leave for germany
he escaping
the uncompleted emotion of his love
finally killed him
though none of us ever complete it
he never found in his poetry
that completion

which we must climb to see
the new world made implicit
by his vigour
these unfinished edifices
speak warmer more possible
more open
than wagners total work of art
we can build upon them
unlike these completed monuments
not so broad a task
but further more penetrating
into the substratum of our minds
where unlocking new rings of power
will free us for the new burdens
casting so quickly on us
new poets will guide us through
ha! but we are a minor form
no one will see us
and from our supreme height
before the eighteenth century
we come very low
below the paintings and the sounds
the world of incidence and things
we hardly feature
who cares! for those who miss these four
could well be dead

earth you darling I will (rilke)
and always beginning
just when all was up
when no escape seems possible
you bring us your surprise
you keep us going

world whose spin in time
like rilkes ringing glass
which shatters as it rings
holds us so close
our true mother
whom we cannot bear to leave
as in our own mother
symbols always departing
for somebody
and as the new spring appears

accompanied this weekend
by die walkuryie
and periahs goldberg
I am walking on my knees

mandlestams goldfinch
for the natural worlds instinct
is innocent relief
against the terror of people
just as the landscape provides
inanimate solace
and a building should be an incident
subordinate to that whole

obsessive world of imagining
and fears so deep
guilt and self-torture
arise from his early death
and impotence in protecting
a mother
these fault lines produce genius
or death

eye of god weekend
tulips more red and yellow
the sky bluer
primroses more purple gold and orange
daffodils apricot and white
freshness of green fresher
camellias pinker
anenomes bluer
the deep-rooted rain of winter
has repaid
the country trembles in expectation
delivery of my liverish science
tai pai it has come to this
talking to the unconsolated
GPs in darkest wigan
about science on its own
yet they are cheerful
one jogs 10 miles a day
in the rain of mersey basin
most are single-handed
their dedicated days are numbered

nearly all indian hindu
a friendly humane bunch
and nice caring wives
the NHS coalface

courage... the only thing
which makes life livable (ibsen)

and in this twinning world
of contradictions
en route to senegal
we land at malaga
due to passenger violence
at these moments how right wing one feels
about the behaviour of others
still private actions are as bad
if unknown
and how small the world is
its human problem
though politicians act
as if it was so large
coming and going
how comfortless their exhortations
their impertinence
their bad manners
how splendid the exceptions

africa again
black subjects in a landscape
their rotting taxis
airport importance
and if given the upper hand
ha ha ha he he he
yet sitting on an immemorial rock
legs asunder
eloquent redolence
of an ancient charisma

picasso owes so much to this art

now we must see this open way
a life unharnessed
there is no other sway
kind waters breaking

on these basalt rocks
whose salt-soaked lives
may make us one by one
become like them
petrified by age old seas
as each holy property of youth
declines and dies
for which there are no fees
in compensation
but the ever present firmness
of your love

ever departing
old sage old rilke

depart these black shores
whose tiny children
hang like beads from every finger
running to your look
whose status gives endowment
to their lives
and in their eyes
that source of mystery springs
where we are one with them
come genes and robots
come o killing god
you are one drop
in that infinity