

ON BEING

Introit

Waiting no longer for damascene time
The poem must serve our speculation
Yes it is Heideggers Being that stands
At the entrance and exit of life.

A muddle of course but so much in line
And who can object to its force
When Jaspers, Arendt and Celan pay homage
To a man of questionable source.

Celan disturbs us by his retort
The poem exposed
But Radnoti fell into his ditch
And still the hexameters flowed.

Here the reader may endure both ways
The occasional rhyme to lighten his days
Furthermore I will break from quatrains
As a modern may do as I please.

1. "Does time itself manifest itself as the horizon of Being." Heidegger

The guardian angel, the guardian god has gone
Though it is very hard not to feel with Holderlin
The Neckar's amiable meadows and bankside willows
Bringing us home to our household gods
What could be more happy than that?
Has Being been changed dear Fritz
Since you roamed your Howardian hills
Imagined the oranges glinting at nightfall
Your vines ambered by sunshine,
And now-now we have obese frames
Plugged to a world of electrons and drains.

Is it over by numbers the kingship, the way
Then sacred ways have gone
Lament is for peasants let's turn to Being
And find in the struggle for sense the poem emerge
Which moves us from caring to seeing.

We will not drop the i for the y
Or argue about our existence
But evolve the poem where metre may alter

And finally find its way home.
 For we are left to imagine what happened in ghettos
 Remember Radnoti's plum jam cooling
 The wine tasting friends buried- imagine!
 In Holderlin's amiable meadows.....

Time was.....but the stories are over
 Like Oedipus must we be blinded to see
 We are all heading for nowhere
 Can a breathturn bring us to Being
 Sitting there all day long-abandoned and joyful.

Is it not this,that a moment of Being
 Replaces a lifetime of loss or of guilt
 This would be wonder O Earth
 This would be thinking,
 For the poem's construction and form
 Allows us to let Being be.
 Not the moment out of time
 For time is an essence of Being
 Together producing creation
 Bringing us new realities
 So doing gives us its blessing,
 How else to explain that line of Radnoti's
 "Safeguard us,spread your vast wing above us,cloud of night".

Much loss and regret is the human lot
 But the redress in finding your Being
 Through for example the poem's meridian
 Arriving there through your own vision
 Throws care and anxiety out of the world
 And if it is but a minute
 Redresses a lifetime that's sold.

The rationale is explained
 The long poem's journey begins
 Let Being emerge.

Wait! A moment of distraction occurs
 And to my detractors destruction
 We know time (t) is a dimension of matter
 Minds matter awards it
 How can time exist without mind (m)
 And Being (b) exists only in time...
 Thus $m=tb$
 Or $b=m/t$
 Or $t=m/b$
 Mind in this context is thinking
 Being is you,all of you

And time most interestingly turns out
As mind divided by Being.

Enough jejeune indulgences
For the truth of our theory emerges in art
The test of our strength.

September-the month of Pushkin in the country
Returning with Onegin or Peter
Is it the light, the rattling leaves
Or lines of ploughed earth,
The shorn wheat feeding birds
Or the memory of summer
Which releases the sap of creation?
Recall the drive to The Fox and Goose
Oak-filled,after London hungry for hedges,
The mind drank the silent air
Which sunk deserted on cloistered lanes
The poignant darkening oaks
Mandated above a golden beige
In the fading twilight gigantic luminous
Resurrecting pastoral England
The sensation of past Being.

Now the new relentless Being
Insists on a new place in the sun
Of course being is change
But here in this long poem at this point in time
When the September sun flows through the garden
We can reach the unanalysable
The quality of our existence through Being.
And if cut short what then?
(As in the death of children)
Will we turn to the spear dipped in blood
As a way of survival
That too is as it is
For Being embraces the world
Some will grow larger in its shadow
Through growth,only death permits growth
The paradox of its fear
Is it a salvation of Being?

Moving to extinction gives us life
Even anxiety,fear are productive
And if they lead to paralysis
(The figure of Celan appears to me)
This too dissolves subject and object
There is no duality.

Happiness too is a wonder of Being

4

Why is it so hard to maintain
Oddly it is not so creative
And there I think is a vein
To explore for surely a "happy thing falls",
Falls to earth to Being
Which when understood ensures happiness
Then a great creation will live.

Before there was a king or nothing
Now Being gives us our key
What could be more happy than that.

II. "It is homage to the majesty of the absurd which bespeaks the presence of human beings." Celan

Sometimes I think there is too much art
And leads me to feel it is all a fart
Elargissay l'art ?!
Yesterday Ken's carnival of crowds
The South Bank curdled with people
The aborted loos, the hanging art
Displayed for your delectation
O poor youth present in spadefuls
Not one delectable,
All this art competes
For our exhausted attention,
What of it!
The suction power of abstraction
But Being must be concrete
Or I must make it so
Can sweep this all away.

Can one still hear the voice of shepherds
On the high hills of Sardinia
There one might grasp and wonder
The eclogues of country scenes
Passing eyes which yearn to behold.
In aspic in Suffolk say
The broad fields and river valleys
Endure much as they always did
They cling to our protection
As lorry, car and coach whip
The centres of their life and peace.
Yes the Saxon church still stands
In loving isolation by the farm
Square Norman towers too are motionless
And deep rose brick Elizabethans glow
By gentle streams among the oaks.
I see it now across the field

While passers-by like me
Make our last glimpse to silence
Before the cursed motorway.

All very well but now
The logjam of time presses
The dead are still waiting
God has not saved them
And what now can we live on?
A burst of confidence in late life
Is a wonder when after Celan
One might feel the world is asunder
As the Rowanberry branch strikes the window
Seen in delirium.

The number horror now assails me
In confidence I let it pass
But under duress a heart sickens
As the houses and people jostle for space
The idyll is blackened
By the promontory of success.
Not to gainsay the hopes of men
But fed like pigeons with bread
Ask yourself trapped in this babble
What am I? What am I doing?

No wonder Lawrence went awol
Seeing the horrors awaiting
Yet TB is now vanquished
Our horror is reaching for Being
And finding.....nothing.
More abstract perhaps but just seeing
Was more his concern than surviving
The impedance to Being surely
Was the clash with Russell
We are back to the pre-Socratics
And we are still fleeing to find it
Escaping from numbers is failure
A man in prison or dying may see
And be richer, completer and ready.

The October sun signals Winter
But still it warms in armfuls
The golden globes of quince
And bees still gather in the misty heat
Late asters starlike beckon them
Our little valley near the Deben
With hidden halls among lost ways
Asks can we survive?
Our territory marks a graven image

On our souls growth
 (As it is for every man)
 Counting among these happy days
 The moral force of landscape
 Whose human hand unceasingly
 Draws redolent upon our nature.

But death still loves the wards,
 A child drowns, another one on fire
 Young men disintegrate in far off wars
 While here the young, distressed
 By drugs the knife and guns
 Seek expectations scarcely understood,
 And anguish strikes as times undoing
 Parsimony breaks our sure resistance.

111 “Look, I am living—on what? Neither childhood nor future are growing less.....Supernumerous existence wells up in my heart”. Rilke

The problem is stated and the solving
 Has to fuse-as in making the departed
 With the living one unit of Being,
 Yet we are still human, ourselves
 Will fight, taste fear, shed blood
 Only the human thing will satisfy
 Not some gaseous spirit of the past,
 The real you and me
 That is the enterprise of Being

It is boring-you have heard it all before
 I agree mechanism is past
 As DNA ignites proves our infinity
 In endless permutation
 In endless surprise
 So through a wonderful synapse
 The strange Being emerged
 It changes all and now we have history.

But Being exists without mind
 As in animals with no sense of time
 And humans when mind has regressed
 But while we exist they have Being
 For what..... “neither childhood nor.....”
 This is not the great one
 Promised from the East
 But us in all our uniqueness
 That would be an impression!
 Yes it is once and once only

But as we grow older
 We see the departed as lighter
 Have no fear for the evergreen fighter
 As past lovers hand on the baton
 Almost relieved from its weight
 Yes we can see we are dying
 No escape from its holy embrace.

Then are we gone from Being
 Only as case by case
 For we see our uniqueness as past
 Indeed come to a charity so vast
 Our current questions enfold
 In that valley of the universe
 Where the unimaginable resides
 You ,as an emblem of Being.

Be as it may for every man
 That sovereignty underpins our life
 Though few attain it
 When that crystal room is entered
 Of the mind,no circumstance can change
 Nor chance destroy your first conception.
 At least so I believe
 Yet we fall through oppression
 Mattering little whether from outside
 Or inside the infamous halls of mind
 What then dear poet as the noose tightens
 Would you die twice?

Then the poem is your asylum
 As Hölderlin struggled through
 The years of schizophrenia
 Let the rowanberry branch tap
 The windows of your delirium
 Here! here between these pages
 A new world a new reality awaits
 All it takes is genius
 The genius of coming from nowhere.

IV. "That which is creative must create itself." Keats

Are the Greeks coming home to their birthplace
 Can we make the voyage to Ithaca
 A return to our own sense of Being,
 Can we be forever departing
 But know in our mind the destination,

Are we ready.

How strong the feeling of dead poets
Our Virgilian guide in dark times
Surely they are the signpost which comforts
And stays in the strangeness we must embrace,
They have already been there and felt it
And what is the transformation they wish
To throw down the doors of reality
And grant you who create a new path.

O poem grant us an apotheosis
Whose symbol opens up a new discourse
In Being wherever that sign will dispose.

Am I out of my depth?
Yet the act of creation is only a guide
For life has so many pleasures
But only creating is one really alive
Or so it seems to me
Thus I persevere in these measures
Hoping through the kindness of form
An emergent idea will cause a surprise
Intrinsic to the method
Really a scientific enterprise.

Could it be the music of time
I mean time experienced through music
Or is it the intervals of life
Of birth, growth and death
That we must decipher.

So we turn to the concrete
Where reality can only destroy us
Thus it is our approach to destruction
Which if the poet has time
Determines his form,
After all look at the action:
Shakespeares strength "which is most faint"
Keats to Severn "Do not breathe on me,
It comes like ice"
Mandelstam hunted to death
Ahmatova in delirium, Celan drowning
Tsvetayeva hanging, Pushkin shot
Holderlin mad and Rilke shattered
Well let's hope to be spared!

Down the avenues of Proustian time?
But we have no Swann, no Madame Gilberte,

No Duc de Guermantes, no Baron Charles
 To leaven so lovingly the action.
 Perhaps then the watchful eye
 And cold loving beauty of Mishima
 Who at least has drawn a merciless picture
 Of ourselves stripped of pretence
 Yes here in this heart of stoniness
 In a passion of nothingness
 Emerges a sun and a victory?

We will pay the price for the noise of time
 Even an illness of information
 Grown so monstrous it will suffocate
 The teeming suction of our expectation,
 Is there no escape down an English lane
 Through the long circling alley of beeches
 Into a landscape of valleys and bliss,
 We cannot return to the cowpat life
 Is there no median of world output?

I know a place where a river sings
 Its music of silence responds to my heart
 There present and future join with time past
 Such coalescence brings us to Being,
 If like the Greeks after Salamis
 Were united in the building of temples
 Then it was finite and godlike,
 But after Celan and Radnoti
 We are too indisposed to ascend
 The gods have not saved us,
 Yet we came through on our island
 Still singing from the same hymnal
 And now we can relish our herpes
 And even our doctors will perish.

Can we care for the children the country
 (O my country!)
 Find our bearings and triumph
 Is it worth the time and the effort
 As we grow older toward our failure
 Of coming together under one see.
 Of course we do not wish for the social
 For the poet it is too much to ask
 But why should he be an exception
 While the rest are watching TV
 That is the point of his mission
 To find the meridian quickly
 In the time I have left here's a promise
 I cannot stop this poem from searching

Till together we find a meridian.

When one human being outweighs the world
Who can resist the response
Those peerless eyes of death seemed boxed
And grander more human becomes our calling
When we ourselves have been out-foxed.

By war and torture, mass graves and nothing
The East's passive entreaty was never for us
Our armour proper would never recover
And Greece will run in our veins forever.

V. "Grow strong again and shine
 O star of ox-eyed heaven
 And you, flying-fish of chance
 And you, o water saying yes". Mandelstam

The gulag experience masters it
A madness of poems, 1937,
Pain in the chest, winter descending
Being mad one can still say yes,
For one who walks with his people
Has no need of returning
Is this a hint of divine?
The angel departed from the beginning
He cannot appear in the camps
While the music ascends with the smoke,
He too is buried forever
A trophy beneath amiable meadows.

And what have we left on our lyre
That can conjure, raise up and is lovely
But Being in all that is happening
Rejecting our fanciful fears
Greeting the world like an angel
Fearless, unspoken, ignoring the jeers.

There is no prescription but the voice of the poet
Who opens, is secret, is sudden
For language is common, united and feels
The pulse of the people awakens and heals.

If I could see you now
If trees could speak
If our end was our beginning
The longing and loss would be fruition

And our thermodynamic law
 Would meet its aspiration,
 Still we are living
 Still we are waiting
 And if you came soft-shouldered
 That my hand might gently pressure
 I will know the depth of touch
 And the language of connection it includes
 This recognising moment cannot pass
 But enter like a medicine
 Into every cell
 And our engagement with our feelings
 Makes our mutual harmony a music
 To our Being.

The coral sand and blue sea
 Send the memory of your figure
 Across the harsh atlantic
 To settle on these early aconites
 Knowing you can never be for me.
 The lime-pink hut, goats water
 And the endless beers
 Are what I bring in memory
 But the island has a virgin charm
 Provokes a new yearning
 Which unfulfilled will yield
 An endless world of fantasy.

But each must reconcile
 Chance and nature,
 If we are cancelled,
 Grow strong in spite of firing squads
 Surely then we shine forever
 Make fate a human thing
 And fire,water,earth
 Must finally speak.

Can you see the scalps of thousands
 Hanging in the dry and formless trees
 The god of nothing bares his teeth
 Toward the gormless crowd
 The thunder will not break
 Nor light descend on water
 I extend my arm toward the night
 Faceless and drawn
 Each chorus chills my soul
 But death will be adored
 And she who veils our sight

Whose temple we will never see
Remembrance is one trophy of her might.

His voice rises to a climax
Surrounded by destruction
Revenge the only path
And from the wood emerge
In arms and smash the citadel,
The tune plays across the hills
The castle doors are opened
Before us the headless killers
Walk across the bridge to greet
The victors of our army
And we attendant lords dismount
Knowing there's nothing but the bourgeoisie.

VI “ ---those
ford creatures over which
the club-footed god comes
stumbling across – by
whose
stellar time too late? “ Celan

Of course you fool it is not freedom
But freedom from self
That leads back to the start—
Where we came from
And where we will go,
That secret freedom carries on
And we expand into it.
This is the relief looked forward too
The so-called redemption
The freedom from being oneself
Into the million year freedom
Of not Being.

This return to the whole
(The universe gives up nothing)
Can be realised here.
That realisation is redemption
The paradox asserts itself
Of mind and matter
Suddenly one sees that Being
Is attained through non-Being
If you like the negative capability
Of Keats.
For the loss of self restores
The true self

The true expression
 Of personality without hindrance
 Perhaps it has all been said
 And said better
 So I have heard.

Do I hear Belinsky's voice
 Wanting still the flesh and blood
 He must be very attached
 To his achievement
 But what of the others.

O liquid world of line and music
 Whose traces we cannot assuage
 Since we come by Shakespeare and Verdi
 Into the living cauldron of emotion
 Of longing and loss, of Being –
 Which we proclaim lives on and on
 In the interstices of our ideas
 Like some colour in Cezanne
 Unrecognised but dominant in its message
 For it is the absurd we bow to
 And to which we come.

O avenue of time whose triumph
 We defeat by beginning again,
 Though the mind is dismantled by time
 Though the love we had is a vacuum
 Though my hand is now old
 And the ancient hand of my mother
 Rests upon my wrist
 Which sign is Being annunciated
 We feel as in a glorious chorus
 Unison toward an eternal sleep
 Awakened only by the kiss of god.

Yes it was only make-believe
 Yet the universe expands into everything
 All imagined things are possible
 And this tiny hope burns on.
 What we have in stone is Being
 Only seen when unanalysed
 And so unredeemable,
 Be, putting aside all other cares
 As in the moment of the rose
 Or the transient blossom,
 Be, as your vision outreaches the sea

And still the open sky poses
 Pink and violet the cloudless ether
 Be, remembering all and nothing
 As the deeper green of country scenes
 Burns deeper green,
 And be, as night anoints
 And quietens the possessed mind.

Or another way more sanguine
 As life itself is drained in haste
 Earth's magic elements reform
 In endless variation
 And life is born, ascends so high
 Is there no end to its ascent
 Except our own cupidity.
 Worst of all our conscious weakness
 And knowledge of our own perimeter
 When measured by great figures
 Yet "no intellect, no ardour is redundant"
 And be content in our attendant roles.

Indeed the road to greatness
 When desired is most easily traced
 In letting Being be
 And if cut down toward that victory
 You pass from being to Being
 As it is in each heart.

But in the world just passed
 Post Stalin, Hitler and a minor cast
 The water feels ever colder
 And making it say yes
 May not be for evermore,
 And chance is also on the line
 How else to see that charm can still be said
 To make our ways return and come again.
 Poem, picture, music, play on play
 A song, a dance, a book, a statue
 Gather for our show and say
 We are not faint
 We will not displease
 So take your places
 When the curtain falls for you
 The crowded roar of seated friends
 Confirms the curtains raised again
 And you have entered unannounced

The new play unbeknown to you.

NOTES:

Part 1, line 17 refers to the difference in German of an older spelling of Being , Seyn as opposed to the newer spelling of Sein , and is there a difference. For example in Kafka I found an additional meaning—belonging to him ie to God. Thus could Being only belong to God, a fascinating possibility in the context of Heidegger’s theological background.

Part 1,page 2 last para. These formulae are only intended qualitatively as there can never be numbers for mind or Being. Also it is an attempt to see time figuratively (perhaps as the only way of destroying it).

Part 1, page 4 first para “happy thing falls ...to earth” after Rilke.

Part 11 ,line 4 “Ken” refers to a previous mayor of London.

Part 11,page 5 second para “the Rowanberry branch” after Ahmatova in her last illness.

Part V, page 11 last line “and she who veils our sight....” Referring to Moneta in Keats , Fall of Hyperion .

Part VI .page 14 second para “ no intellect..... ” from Rilke.