

June 2012

Poem to my poets, and chansons

" I have halted my horse by the dove-moaning tree, I whistle a note more sweet. Peace to the dying who have not seen this day! But tidings there are of my brother the poet: once more he has written a song of great sweetness. And some there are who have knowledge thereof....."

The sun shines again on this gloomy June
A rare sight for it has rained on our hearts
Through many unwelcome days rendering
One's natural sadness more exquisite,
Engulfed by the cacophony of life
The muddy liberal scene oozes bile
For here we do not die so easily
Even those who wish to die-cannot,
I have said my piece in poems, Being
Sketches, winter songs and now late poems
And that long one supernumerary
Whose spelling always wrongs me.
A song of great sweetness can lie ahead
Is it in spite of yesterday's horror
Or to hold out for the cause, the promise
Of the salt in the wound, eternalised.
Let me break with the moderns, have done with
After all we have been there and seen it
Break out of the forest of guilt and history
Come with me to a song of great sweetness....

Remember the hill climbed so many times
The garden gate tinkling led to it
From there came the bell of Proust's gate
And that famous tea of his grandmother
Brings back our tears for one's own mother
For this and my other transgressions
You and I must reach a sure destiny
A planetary lyric demands it.

Can Higgs-Boson give us such sweetness
This particle which glues us together
Was it the time, a new revolution?
Of what lay behind evolution,
Yet at Cern tears were shed for the master
Who thought it all up on an envelope
And now we're beginning again.

Of course science needs all our love
Sometimes to stop it malfunctioning
But poets have need of attention
Both sing the abyss and build bridges
Above the dark torrent before us
This darkness also lives in our nature
And together we may be extinguished
No matter how much we've distinguished
Ourselves, the world or its acolytes.

Therefore rest in the lives of our forbears
Who hidden in cosmic valleys
Unending channels of eternity
Speak through the music of spheres
And on their wings our own hopes live and die.

The sibilant black and white keys

Play the unresolving tension
Past promises of hope and glory
Lift the shattered spirit of our day
To light and paradise.

Look back on a childhood of dreaming
Of youth and the struggle for sanity
Of maturity where we learned to remember
And now we are joining the end game
Of learning how to forget,
At last we see a conclusion
A world made one.

A universe only redacted
Surely a vast charity
Yes that hallowed love won
The logic of imagination.

Moneta once stood before Keats
To answer the miseries of the world
Could other worlds vouchsafe us?
And be cosmically certain of fate,
All lies in a future not vouchsafed
That is our secret power
Then there is no burden no disgrace
'No loss of personal existence to deplore'.

But here comes one who sees, knows
Leading us to our native land
Where the noontide sun of summer
Never fails its scorching angelus
We follow as the piper pipes
His lovely blissful tune
A magic harmony as if some god
Waiting by the river solemn and restrained
Lays his hand upon our shoulder
Guides us to the further shore
And on his lips the smile of peace
"There are further gods to find"
His arms are wide for our embrace
And his kiss is the kiss of eternal love.

We follow the enchanted music
We hurry to keep his rapid pace
As the piper strides ahead
No ratcatcher he in coloured
Cloak and jingling hat.
The city is no mirage in the plain
We see it from the circling hills
Down and down we stumble
Into the sun-drenched streets
So intent the people do not see us
In their busy lives of business,
We have come to give another image
Of reality, already their ships
Are loaded and pointing westwards.

This image of ambiguity
Is as certain as the wavicle
On which reason based her charge
But ours is not imposed
seeks no attention or obedience
It receives your meaning and frees you

Yet in that freedom lies a trap
 Where self-awareness loses to itself
 No longer self-exposed to life
 Hidden in her material ways.

' Whatsoever things are lovely and of good report...'
 Does the moment come-the song of life
 Like sunbeams through the azure sky
 Wrapped in nature's strange and devious ways
 The cocoon in which we're swaddled
 Cracks, the egg now broken for a second time
 But this in full possession and maturity
 Whose freedom's given end we do not seek.

Time is the blood flow of our souls
 And banished all is healed
 We spring like gods though the void
 Is smiling and every helix
 Twisting this way that in the wind
 Is just the starting rod of Being
 Which is dimensionless.
 Surely all these hopes are just implausible
 You say and seeking words will not suffice,
 Be patient if my song is late
 To give the meaning you propose.

Self-taught she reaches Chopin
 Which on her fingers ever- newly born
 The study's rise and fall is tears
 O happy days in coming through
 His hopes, his loss, his longing ways
 Brings us to the point of no return
 Which you must reach.
 Listen- the voices in the apple tree
 Return to you from cast-off years
 On many-sided fears he turns his back
 We touch and there is only one word -peace.

The day still holds its promised light
 Abundant rain and nature radiant
 Autumn seed-heads gather in the dusk
 The oaks still greenly black
 Empower the landscape
 And England gives as only England can
 Her widening skies and fields of home;
 Do not through thinking and high purpose
 Break these bonds her people made
 Consider always their enduring love
 Their fealty to her mystic crown
 The sacrifices of their fathers and their sons
 Binding the wounds of history
 Utterly unasked and thrust upon them.

Yet the world has changed again
 No longer what we were
 But we can sing in lifeboats
 Songs of great sweetness
 Give balm to sins of Empire
 Of excesses, of denial and of virtue
 Which stings for lack of limpidness.

Restores our hope while unforgetting
Surely these lips touch the moist helix
And we have our Michelangelo
From molecules to men each layer
Leaps to untold worlds
Particles of nothing become atoms
Atoms molecules where pattern starts
Design of cells then tissues unite
To all these tableau forms
And us who have out-topped the world
And brought the universe to heel
Creating godheads, love, art, science
'On those right-angled knees'.

Do these paeons answer to our song
Whose task to each a gold alert
Why then we've answered it
Come princes, powers, and lepers all
Fly up to knowledge granted all
There love does rest in every colour
Our native land eternalised each hour.

A Summer shower makes real again
The pungent exercise of living
We must strike our camp
And board those boats westward
Let the shore depart, the rhythmic sea
Gives death its lovely rhyme
Bequeath our wreath as we depart
The priest-like swell enjoins farewell.

O radiant trees who speak our language
By their silent affirmation
Their numberless green canopies
Protect us from our own corruption
Contain a message from the stars
Still shining, long since dead
As Shakespeare lights our human plot
For if truth and beauty are but dead
Then love itself is just a blot
And ashes lie on every troubled head.

The tune plays on defying chance
Who with necessity has banned our gods
Holderlin and Beethoven must fly
From the very world of all of us
There rivers and sacred groves once led
To sun-filled temples shining white
Green brooks and hills of myrtle
Cast their scent of pine and incense
On the shepherd keeping holy watch,
He gazed for hours, days, years
With his sheep and friends
Drank in the breathless night
The loitering moon lit your flute
Till we drugged by your melody
Our souls longing for the fabled notes
Slept in quiet dreamless sleep.

O Cosmos are you not old enough, grow up!
Have you not played your tricks of light
Long enough to bore a schoolboy
Must we suffer your entangled numbers

Defying all common law and decency,
Can we just say you owe eternity
Or let time reverse, begin again
Freed of all this destructive action
Old Saturn can restore his throne
And Jupiter can beg Hyperion's mercy.

O words, O great progenitor
O language, starting point of Being
Ten thousand years the record is not long
Of our known experience
Of all these misunderstandings
And you are the oldest art
Whose medium we entrust to Being
Restoring our sense of oneness
The pontifical parietal cells,
Were they gifted or came by chance
Through the old necessity- survival,
Or implanted by a god who needs us
To give meaning to his universe.

Implausible you repeat again
True only Falstaff in his sac
With Hal to urge him on
Illuminates this hypothesis
And make us laugh so loud we did not see
Before our eyes *what* must be.

Only by a hint or whisper
Sometimes by a miracle
Or wondrous insight will he show
Or let us proceed to self-destruction,
If he can survive the holocaust
He can survive anything.
Hyperion may be a messenger
Helping us not to fall apart
By slow attrition or nuclear war
For he has prepared his palaces
And waits for our eternity.

Between these two planes we live
Just as Picasso lives by his imagination
Through the time and through the spaces
A song of life can still be heard
Which will make death another rhyme
Art will make the forest clear
' Long live the King!'
As the guillotine screeches down.

The bomb is dropped the people underneath
Are gone the only cry is where
The woman screams the men collapse
The children run like scattered hens
And still he writes hexameters
The guns are cocked ' fire ' is heard
He watches the infinity of time
Pass falling headlong by the ditch
Not dead yet he writes in scrawl
As blood and mud are mounting to his ear
And heard above the finishing pitch
The tattered cahier covered
By a final movement of his arm.
Years later his loving wife digs and finds

His final poems in that grave ditch
Now all Hungary knows and feels
Radnoti's love for his country's life
Our song sticking in our throat
Wait too for the stiletto, for the knife
That all mankind is running through,
O start again you see our faces pall
That we may be contented as we fall.

O the myriad faces and places
Gone like a termite hill.

He rose as the early morning light
Lit the purple jacarandas
Bowed before the makeshift covenant
And walked the path of violet palms,
The lepers waited for their morning dose
Amid his Jeremiah lamentation
No need to hear another song
As near to sweetness as a gong
Announcing you have come
Gone now to his hallowed love
By bullet (by those he helped) in the brain
Ticket back to god?
Or everlasting reconciliation?

Another light another day
And on our tightrope so we sway
These sacred fears have kept the flame alive,
The price of beauty and of sadness
Dear Keats reminds us from his eternal grave,
His beating wings echo all his lines
And still we mourn by Roman pines
His voice so plangent of his Being
His face like ice upon our soul
Is ever present.

These poets like cranes in autumn
Take flight to unknown heights
Our love such as it is goes with them
Their songs contain their Being:

Chanson first.

Each one unique and so contrite
To make us one through all their plight
The message in the bottle writes
Of fear, of lust, of love and lights
A hewn path whose noble life
In poems cuts us like a knife
How easy death with such a throng
To join and talk and so belong
You spoke in such plain terms and seized
The moment never yet appeased.

Chanson second.

So let me now for heavens only sake
Be sure your there among his trophies safe
That you are real and we on earth attend
Our souls short stay, emigrés from heaven
Marina in her wisdom saw that truth

Can we who follow do half as much
As she, though cut down by her own proof
With every right to return her ticket
But to her surprise and joy has bought
Back her youth in that vast charity.

Chanson third.

Do not as poets come admit the truth
For it doth dwell in visitation
Though your life must now translate its will
It speaks outside the noise of time
And stands above your head in triumph
What are you, where comest thou?
All her answers come in one downpour of light
Annihilation is all we seek
Since we have seen our source
Poetry is God.

Chanson fourth.

The cello sounds and angels dance
There among the notes which never lie
The spirit flies to Hippolytus
Who knows our love is like a forest glade
Where he now searches for his goddess
Do not desert him now Artemis
You who hold him in your arms
Safeguard us who try to speak
Of your great charity, your honour
And in our ending come and bear us up.

Chanson fifth.

O kindly ones how bright you shine
Commanding us to live and die
Let me be an apostolic bearer
Wherein her love, her spirit, render
Obsolete all these human tears
What else suffices to repay her love?
She waits, this quiet simple life
Her dreams, her hopes are formless shadows
Still helping, still reminding
The debt I owe is very great
Give her glory!