

Long poem while in Antigua dec-jan 2017

## WAVING MY KNIFE

"Death flowers in my patience here" M Radnoti (MR)

"Of never understanding ourselves  
and of threatening ourselves with death" P.Neruda

The great thing about departure from these shores  
Is one looks back with nostalgia at the places  
Which only yesterday one complained about-the houses  
The people,the traffic,the roads,the litter  
Where our countryside finds itself beleaguered,  
Yet as Brodsky says the landscape is never really known  
Its loss is never total,it lives on in the mind  
In the pictures-Corot,Constable-and now abstraction  
Which shows the there but we do not know where,  
Is also what one feels about the afterlife.

There is a limit to the water under the bridge  
(The democratic hysteria over Brexit and  
As i return, for gods sake, Northern Ireland again)  
Time to sum it all up and avoid turning ones back  
On people but not on our fancies.  
Return happiness to its natural charm  
In which the poem's title combines  
The final thing with something distinguished.

Take Bach and the cello suites  
My copies will be buried with me  
I can't recall the number of hours i tried-why-  
Because they have a metaphysical presence  
Understood by all and leave to poetry  
To describe that in language for the world,  
As science does by experiment,  
Together making true Auden's wonderful phrase  
'Time worships language' (music is time too)  
And the job is done.

Art and science are never eschatological  
Not when the universe is still unexplored  
And while our tentative conclusions have mark-  
For this planet,who knows what lies ahead.  
Yet there is faith in what ought to be  
A faith not wishful but a call to action.

With philosophy done i turn to metre  
(And sound) to send a message from the oak tree  
Not regular as you see but woven  
Into the prosody of expression.  
Here among sand,blue sky,sun and sails  
With just my darling lady to annoy  
We are free of all encumbrance  
Alone with the very rich hours  
To tell us why we live and die,

Their reward by our constant attention  
 Will peel off the accretions of distaste  
 Only the task of composition  
 Brings forth the unexpected  
 Adding we hope to a further clearing in the forest  
 Of culture which 'is only as good as its woods' .....Auden

II

"The last key-the cold key to oblivion,sweeter than  
 all the arduours of the heart" Pushkin

Dear Ahmatova reminded me of this wading  
 Through her love poems,Northern elegies the high point,  
 And these Russians,the east, bordering god,  
 Forgive our imaginary woes for theirs  
 The industrial carnage of the twentieth century  
 Each one i hope a star otherwise the universe  
 Is not worth a medieval piss-pot.  
 They reach us by thought faster than light  
 And this force unmeasurable is everywhere.

Guesswork and still the sensations rule  
 While faith has a terrible battering  
 But it has gone too far and Bach or Mozart  
 Might lead us to a grace not guessed before  
 How can they with their aesthete be wrong.  
 Science does rule take the stem cell  
 A hint of immortality?  
 But our billions of cells are subject yet to fate  
 Dear evolution-explain their tender utterance  
 It must be more than bait.

In these upside down times  
 Important to keep distance and humour  
 The crowd, the media,politicians gripped by hysteria  
 It will pass and the certain rule of science  
 And poetic charm will bring the birds to rest.  
 With that in mind we turn to this lands beauty  
 For we all can fall for the little island life-  
 The blue water turns silver at night  
 The body moving through in soft delight  
 Absorbs the sun through salt-flecked waves  
 The mind at rest in the swimmers arms  
 Pronounces a heavenward course  
 In the reverie of unconscious thought.  
 The island charm- but a closer look  
 Reveals the detritus in the jungle  
 The unbuilt houses and unredeeming shacks  
 And the sad connection- tourists and money.  
 Yet i do not go back on those first lines  
 And as i'm here for half the winter  
 I'll not complain but bring the truth to bear  
 As these lines must always be quite fair.

How much one seeks to blaze a trail  
 Like Mozart seen by all,  
 Imagines all the staves anew  
 And dead at 35 he said "why now".

New poems make a forest clearing  
 But unlike Mozart for the cognoscenti  
 They're cold and bold but understandable?  
 No worse than modern science  
 Pick up a dose of Nature  
 Unfortunately this is the future.

One might go bloody and violent too and  
 On one's tongue be ruthless and abject  
 For whether it be early American,  
 The British Empire, Or Russia  
 (Don't mention the Germans)  
 A bloody meridian is always crossed  
 Though we can claim more backward  
 When the killing fields are forward.

Such are empires old and new  
 And who is sane enough to answer  
 For the man standing like a why.  
 We bow to fate-the universe untold  
 Can revelation bring us from the cold  
 Can what should be-be nearer to the truth.

### III

"Yes, I can describe it" Ahmatova (AA)

From what absurdity a poem comes  
 Measureless in its humanity  
 A contradiction to A I  
 As mortal godheads cover all the land.  
 Yet matter has unknown felicities  
 Which we have just begun to find.  
 Language a chance mutation or  
 God-given to make us like a tribe  
 Either way we take him up  
 And as at Salamis he must come.  
 No theology-no Bach.  
 For it must shine in Titian's face  
 Or Michelangelo's pieta  
 The logic of a time-worn grace.

So we live by faith alone- in reason,  
 Or the the art of poetry, the former  
 Means another human being helps  
 The latter depends on you alone  
 Both realities will save the day.  
 And numbers? here ends the quiz.

A simple hymn the water lapping at my feet  
 Its priestly memory holds time still  
 All chance and necessity are buried there  
 And even death is logged among its molecules.  
 Here life from something has been born  
 And where we came from looks like nothing  
 But we are going back to somewhere  
 Somewhere where we started.

In Walcott's land the chattering cicada  
 Converse with Montale in this ceaseless search  
 Whether Liguria or Antigua let the metre

Stumble on their great reveries.  
The wind upon my shoulder sets the sail  
The boat hums its happy tune of speed  
I and the boatman well out to sea  
A lovely blueness rules the sky  
We are trophies of a greater life  
And there our object- volcanic  
Montserrat looms quickly by.

#### IV

"so that the pink link of blood  
and the one-armed ringing of the grass  
may pronounce their last goodbyes,  
the one mustering courage, the other  
setting out for its dream beyond reason." Mandelstam(OM)

In the end the word must speak it  
Bring it into reality and oppose  
Our endless information and our numbers  
The evil of a thousand tongues beset us  
Conspiracy and cultural breakdown  
Where lies disaster and human misery.  
Surely we are not repeating Stalin,  
Hitler, and Mao Tse Tung again  
Let them first protest our modern versions  
Before they crowd our streets with paper tigers  
They would be the first to feel the noose  
Dictators at least have no discrimination  
Which is their strongest point.  
In a great culture most things are understood  
And this the place of poetry-the formula  
Which can unite world culture  
To those whose cultures worth the name  
Including the primitive and the sane.

Still how beautiful the experiment  
And the theory underlying it  
Perhaps in physics its got beyond the joke  
On nature but we in medicine still attend  
The human loss and longing.  
Art carries much more baggage  
And the best like physics more obscure  
As in abstract expressionism  
And the later Brodsky or Tsvetaeva  
But in time and total absorption  
You can keep up with them.

Still i see Mandelstam in his camp  
Ice cold and ageing fast,  
Or Radnoti dying in his ditch  
Now immortal and beyond the gods,  
Or Tsvetaeva driven to a noose  
The Russian genius for murder,  
But we have their memory and who knows  
What part it plays in resurrection.  
Yet of the unknown and forgotten billions  
Only a god can recall them .  
If stars are souls what better use for them  
Than pointless stars of light which shine so bright  
So far away and no green hills to see

These distances are so absurd  
Is it an illusion could they be next door.

Are we both pawns and godheads  
Whose contradiction is greatness,  
The aesthetic is the combining force  
Undemocratic in science and in art  
And why religion came to play its part  
The seraphim could dwell in all their hearts  
Free from the artificial ugliness  
We are building round us.

This beauty, a world of magic  
So often springs from nature  
The source and paradox of chance  
Indifferent and selective  
Unless the unseen truth is somehow  
Woven in the fabric of the chaos  
And the love we feel though mortal  
Does move the earth and sky  
By our redemption and clear-sighted  
Freedom as the fifth dimension.

V

"As it is we never escape from the dream  
From the ring, from the enchantment,  
Earth the virgin springs up again in hills  
But the mist hides them from us" Mandelstam

I said before and a friend remarked  
Matter a propos the brain and mind  
Will have many surprises in store  
The mind that moves the atoms  
May not be mechanical at all.  
Godel supposed new particles  
And if quantum based  
At least unpredictable if not  
Something even more exotic.

How lovely the morning sea  
Undisturbed gives peace  
Held between the golden sand  
And a sky of coral pink  
Creates a harmony of sense  
And now that time has spared me  
I bow to the unknown god.

Take Mahler and the universe  
Is music the unseen will  
Whose clarity and presence  
Is plain for all to hear, the word too  
Is sound which together make  
Philosophy and science wilt.  
The puzzle is the past and truth  
Which now rejoins a better truth  
I cannot say they're wrong.

There is no doubt what ought to be  
Is where our faith is set  
We are not mannequins or robots

And if we're wrong the universe  
Is not worth a medieval pisspot  
To deceive us so.

VI

"Poetry is breaking bread with the dead " Auden

Those limestone hills are with him now  
Those ideal childhoods helped  
And though my flaws are all as one  
With my dead father in Golders Green  
The flaws are what has helped to win-  
Preserved the dream- a god of the dead.  
Though fate is merciless and strong  
In Rhodesia the death of children  
The arc light beating down on scalps  
Shaved and searched for veins  
Valium for tetanic spasms of the newborn  
And I survived how strong is youth  
At 24- with Keats already dead.

Here instead of ash trees palms are dying  
Nature is in love with death  
It keeps us to the mark  
And if we can rhyme it or adore it  
Surely we can banish it.  
How inconvenient and ugly it is  
That these so billion cells should  
By some whim of nature/fate  
Who when living was tender  
And expressive ,without hate  
By this disproportion should dissolve  
Into nothing- that contorted mirror  
Where yesterday it is reported  
The dying child demanded Father Christmas  
And died within his arms-homo dei!  
Is that not us.

O Mozart what fun you had composing  
The argument so clear compared to now  
Its loveliness is metaphysics and with Haydn  
Such sense and onward motion.  
Indeed i love the abstract but not modern  
Except the visual-Pollock, Still and Gorky  
No it is not Bollock and Bacon still asserts  
The ugly beauty and its charm in forms we know.  
Now on this south beach water has its music too  
The hills are green and we will not look too low.

Speech is metre too- my excuse for my borderline,  
Just evolution-how convenient this vaccuming  
Of all our thinking into one great bag  
And now i've lived twice as long as Mozart  
There's no excuse to living without fear  
An ounce of love is worth a tons reward.

Still one's driven by the strangest craft  
And gods nativity is nearly here  
Where strangers knelt and oxen brayed

The god of life chose a cattleshed  
 For us our world of money and of hubris  
 Symbolic of the world of men  
 Are now like driftwood from the shore  
 For bread is just another form of flesh  
 And wine is simply blood -and hope  
 The nightingale- god restores our fealty.

How many times do we retrace our steps  
 In words to find the combination  
 That unshakes and brings to light  
 Suspending loneliness and  
 Entranced like children by Noel  
 A harmony touches the inchoate nerves  
 Which shimmer into truth and beauty  
 The word is fastened to each other  
 And lo ancient ties are brought together.

## VII

"Earth, you darling, I will. Rilke

Perhaps it is the poetry which saves us  
 Though we may seem irrelevant and slant,  
 Science powers on with things that happen  
 Maths too seems unassailable  
 Pace Godel if i have it right  
 There can be limits but it still works  
 So not to worry as in quantum  
 This trajectory gives results.  
 The bible was the great design  
 The word triumphant ,pliant, holy,  
 Clear rules ,a way of life,a future,  
 Now bites the dust it resurrected  
 Done for by the twentieth century.

Could Mozart raise the beauty upward  
 Or Wagner test the senses  
 Now the key is thrown away  
 The metre codes the sound by which we're heard  
 The sound itself becomes the new -found truth  
 Imperatives and enjambment meet the day  
 And be among the trophies of her day.

Analyse her wondrous smile?  
 Her loyalty and ever present help...  
 Her kindness and objective love...  
 Her strength and no-nonsense style...  
 Outshine the guile of art and science  
 And only poetry will bend the knee  
 The true spirit of our hope to be.

## VIII

"For this is the only possible world" Spinoza

The cross-currents of two persons he and I  
 The poet is devoted and everlasting (AA)

Bridging the divided self  
 Though fear and conflict achieved  
 What harmony and calm mistook  
 But now the fire burns lower  
 To bring home the quotidian blaze.

Forgive me the personal note  
 One tries to reach subject to object  
 And we all know its inbetween.

Here the late afternoon sunshine  
 Like frost and sun in England marvellous  
 The seasons what impact they have  
 Think of Pushkin all done in Autumn.  
 Bourgeois sentiments like mine are everywhere  
 Money to artists is a form of recognition  
 And we can say this for the poet  
 He will never see a fortune.  
 The Pied Piper hates them  
 But when you break a leg  
 Or sign a contract, fly a plane  
 Or need another human being  
 The despised bourgeoisie are there  
 Nine times out of ten.

Yet complacency is the worst of sins  
 And far from true happiness  
 The English scene is under threat  
 By hordes of numbers, possessions,  
 And a kind of gormless obsession  
 With movement, noise and light.  
 Just being free from cars is bliss  
 To walk along the Teme hear Elgar  
 And resist the monoculture.  
 Like Mozart humming his Magic Flute  
 And breaking down only days to go  
 And in a final mass not cursing gods woe.

Can we re-enter his world of beauty  
 Back God as irreplaceable  
 Like Bach so central with all the drawbacks  
 Innocent death everywhere  
 And keep to those right-angled knees....  
 Conscious of their gift is key.

Where is Earth's distant land where  
 Mortality and peace can live  
 No wishful fairyland to end our plight  
 But there with his Glockenspiel  
 Impish and only days to go.

## IX

"Only a God can save us" Heidegger

Settle down! Love the music and the play  
 The blue water like some great cocktail  
 You can swim in everlastingly  
 Rinses the mind by simple vision,  
 The wind slants the sails



The horizon of time meets the sky  
 The blueness of infinity,  
 The mind, hero of grief and memory  
 Is the ensign flag before me,  
 The cosmos looks quite hostile  
 To the fragile life it formed  
 So paradise in Sagan's terms  
 Seems unlikely and this may be the clue  
 Like a mysterious untold story  
 Perhaps from Poe  
 The biggest contradiction is not the foe.  
 Consciousness from chaos  
 There's a contradiction for you  
 What meaning? unless the words  
 Are sent from heaven above.

Two weeks in the past is sliding by  
 The Trump card has been played  
 And Mrs May takes on the augean stables,  
 What art of politics? What grasp?  
 Seems further down than in the past  
 Or is this just old age which i insist  
 Can never be- if you make a fist of it.

The aesthetic is the reason of life  
 The Greek statue will never be surpassed  
 The love of Tristan is beyond human  
 It is aesthetic fate in glory  
 So green men from Mars or funny hybrids  
 Of elements yet to be discovered  
 I believe can never reach our pitch  
 While god used beauty for evolutions  
 Touchstone and innocent death  
 The rhyming habit of our exit.

Happiness is not man-made but sorrow is  
 And so we see how Bach and Mozart  
 Rose to heights that only work and gifts could give  
 And god who sent it on their own admission  
 Must be accepted if we wish to rise  
 To heights that more than intuition finds  
 For revelation can occur there too.

And for our next trick since god  
 Can be the great put-off to men  
 Though women see more clearly here  
 And words handmaiden of the seraphim (OM)  
 Might be returned to greatness  
 And so reveal like science the mainspring  
 Of existence.

And on the beach we talk of Turing  
 To a man taking with a drone  
 Photos of a new year party  
 And I'm with Godel-a machine that suffers  
 Is no longer a machine  
 "Within the meaning of the act".

The sea ,the sea, mountain,snow and desert  
 The fields of Herefordshire,  
 As you look from Wigmore to Ludlow  
 The pattern of tree and farm

Brings imagination and reality together  
 The path to the transcendent  
 As each church in its setting  
 Captures the spirit of each place  
 The aesthetic rightness of its choice  
 A proof of truth- of objective correlative (TSE).  
 Proof being the fashionable tool  
 Compared to truth.  
 This testimony of fitness to the country scene  
 As in the Pagoda or the Bhuddist Wat  
 The Mosque or Greek Temple  
 Gives sure expression of a heart  
 Above the analysts dream.

## X

"Only another human being will help us" Platonov

The Suffolk scene has long gone  
 Duck shooting on lonely marshes  
 The eccentrics like Fitzgerald  
 In the isolation of the estauries  
 Are now filled with villas  
 Which a few years back were in Ruislip.  
 The glimpse i had is found  
 In the unbeaten roads of high suffolk  
 Or the wide fields of middle norfolk  
 But all is contracting before large farms  
 And the inevitable urban rangerover  
 For which there is no range left.  
 To cap it the future in the hands  
 Of Trump and Putin and Xi  
 Mortal features were never so clear.

The rattling sails speak escape  
 Who can blame the rich  
 For self-indulgence and a warmer clime  
 The people outwardly are striving  
 But inner strength is ebbing.  
 We play backgammon for the thousanth time  
 Lying by the sea warm as tea.

Yesterday spoke to a man from Nevada  
 Casinos pay, no taxes there  
 Sailed from Sweden in his new boat  
 This modest American alone  
 Thought nothing of it (had been in the Navy)  
 Boats cheaper there, then down the channel  
 Trade wind- Canaries and north of Verde  
 Here i am piece of cake unsaid it seemed,  
 Nothing rich at thirty seven feet  
 But still a packet  
 And quietly had made his point.

The left are too busy hurting us  
 The right are unspeakable  
 Retire like Ovid to ones vines  
 The world of botany so underated  
 What can replace the covered hill  
 Full of sweet chestnut and olives

Or through the garden gate  
 To those enchanted slopes  
 The Italianissimo of the cypress grove.

How the pastoral scene is winning  
 Perhaps eternity is that yew  
 Standing sentinel beside the church  
 Guarding the graves for resurrection  
 Mother and mothers lying there  
 Innocent of deaths meaning  
 Bewildered at its coming  
 "My dear, is my mind going"  
 Not just observance, nothing, nothing!  
 Is more important than they.

## XI

"Why abandon a belief merely because it ceases to be true  
 Cling to it long enough and it will come true again" Frost (RF)

So one clings to what ought to be  
 Like a child innocence may overcome  
 Everything including knowingness  
 The villa novels show the depths  
 Of triteness and money  
 One is immune to the ennui  
 And untouched by gratuitness  
 The banality is obvious  
 And while i fill the hours with them  
 Not a poem or song without words  
 Can emerge from their addiction  
 In a long holiday in the Antiguan sun.

The beach is a kind of paradise  
 And the past reviewed like soldiers  
 Marching past your pedestal,  
 In spite of everything still here  
 Persuading yourself that words  
 Given life and light and passion  
 Will suddenly reveal the plot  
 And peal out like bells good news  
 And overcome indigent life eg  
 "The best way out is through" RF

The sea is the last richness  
 The inner island of hotchpotch houses  
 Ramshackle and decaying shacks  
 Among outsize tinpot castellations  
 In a world that we were made for  
 And where time our burden  
 Will be renounced by language.

Benissimo when shall we see you again  
 Beloved Florence, Venice, Rome  
 And then to Puglia and the olives  
 The Greek towns fertilising  
 The Roman view-Hadrian and so forth  
 This crossroads soon byzantine  
 And democracy itself falters  
 Beneath the weight of numbers  
 Ignorance and stupidity.

Thus it is your move and we draw near  
 The light beckons from the further shore,  
 With sanity restored and work expired  
 The pitch is adamant for the lower key  
 Here perhaps for the first time, its natural  
 And the competition is withdrawing  
 To its predestined and silent cave,  
 Here from the look-outs nest  
 The wise and sacred eye peers north  
 Where the seasons mark divided time  
 And the calendar of advent, trinity, lent  
 Connects with the primordial fields  
 Where lives our life and energy, survival.

## XII

"I can see nothing but you" H. James

Time the enigma but i side with Pasternak  
 Time was made for us, not us for time  
 Which rather changes the focus, don't you think  
 And brought him back to what lay behind  
 The Pieta of Michelangelo and Spinoza's point,  
 We'll see soon in any case.  
 Back to the limestone hills for some  
 But give me those "blue remembered hills"  
 Of Greece or Shropshire every time.

Elgar gets close avoiding the cowpats  
 And though empire is no longer in vogue  
 It did supply a greater aspiration  
 Besides digging for silver and gold.  
 Now America and Trumpettes blow  
 Though gold is uppermost it seems  
 To whichever philosophy you turn  
 And art and science too is money  
 (And science may yet destroy us)  
 But poetry will never make a fortune  
 The prayer banner of man's good sense.

## XIII

"And there shall be no more time" John, Revelations

Fundamental forces seem overwhelming  
 Human history largely sorrowful  
 So what do we owe the gods?  
 Unless we are descended from them  
 Then we return to our rightful place  
 After Darwin they exist in other places  
 And their law is fate that is :  
 The guiltless shall be found guilty  
 So explaining cancer and the death of children  
 Let alone six million jews.

Time and death are just distractions  
 Waiting for a rhyme to finish off  
 Each human being is a star

Going to his allotted place  
 The many universes have seen it all before  
 They swing like pendulums  
 And all they need is winding up,

Ok so i'm leaving reality?  
 It's simpler than Brodsky's G and G  
 An aesthetic beyond belief or logic  
 Let the metre be the sound  
 And let the sound be the meaning  
 Though meaning may just be vanity  
 We'll risk that for the sake of tragedy.

In all of us is Hippolytus  
 The puzzle of ourselves  
 New ways of saying each experience  
 Unless this is our tragedy  
 That we can never truly say it.  
 Full possession is what we seek  
 But the everlasting thing is that restraint.

#### XIV

"It is an hieroglyphical and standard lesson of the whole  
 world and creatures of god.....it is a sensible fit of that  
 harmony which intellectually sounds in the ears of god"  
 Thomas Browne, Religio Medici -on music.

The oak trees are still standing  
 And we can plot for the millionth time  
 A way through remote and forgotten valleys  
 There the curve of lane and field  
 Reveals another scene worthy of Tennyson  
 Or Browning in a memory of Asolo.  
 The places and landscapes still unseen  
 But captured in the minds grasp  
 And the pastoral scenes of heath  
 And moorland necklaced by fields  
 Give them warmth and solicitude.  
 Travelling from Poppi to Florence,  
 Walking from Nauplia to Epidaurus,  
 Exploring Samos and Crete,  
 Or the savannah of Rhodesia  
 And the jungles of Malaya,  
 Have given the tranquillity of the past  
 Realising that truth changes with time  
 As art and science impose their will  
 Though the greek statue will never change  
 For it contains the divine form  
 The homo dei of the mysterious enterprise  
 "The whole commission which from God we had" De Q  
 Plays out its guiltless tune.

#### XV

"We must be still, and still moving..." Eliot (TSE)

The pastoral scene never gives up on us  
 It is the shadow of a world imagined  
 The river teems with household gods

The wayfaring trees line the banks  
 As Holderlin in decline stared out  
 Giving his spirit some reward  
 Having given us archipeligo  
 So tremendous an evocation  
 Of confidence in the restoring gods.  
 These heroes are in the pantheon  
 Some famous and most unheard  
 Gathered with Virgil and Dante  
 Brodsky and Frost and Tsvetaeva  
 Illustrators of new ways forward.

The landscape is not transferable  
 And provides a moral scenery  
 What else is a Constable painting  
 And how one turns to oak or elm  
 And now we know how perishable  
 Are these symbols of botanic love.

Perhaps one is returning to where one started  
 But then this understanding was silent  
 The advantage of age heightens us  
 So that every action and reaction  
 Is filtered through the minds plasticity  
 Into such abstraction as Pollock or Still  
 And the poem can emerge minted  
 By this wonderful expansion  
 Revealing unknown paths  
 And untold realities one did not see before.

## XVI

"There is a point of no return, you have to reach that point" Kafka (FK)

The analysis lies in the poetry  
 After Feldman on quantum  
 Its not asking too much  
 The best is Brodsky on Tsvetaeva  
 (Footnote to New Years Greeting)  
 A prose poem of its own, paradise,  
 For those with similar hopes.  
 Or a roomful of Giottas -delusion-  
 No, wrong word! illusion possibly  
 Each must find his own messenger  
 Devoted and everlasting .

After all our metaphors are a protest  
 Against logic- calling something  
 Something else:  
 "As water is condensed time"  
 "As love is greater than ourseves" JB  
 Battling the walls of the prison  
 Into being and all the atoms.

The light on the horizon is brighter  
 Nearer than everything  
 As the sun sets in admiration  
 Surely not just atoms and opinion  
 But a meaning which gathers  
 A meaning you can bow down to  
 And not be extinguished.

The swimmer tells me to enjoy every moment  
This healing power of the sea  
The fusion of Apollo and Dionysis  
Gives full possession ahead.

XVII

"To bear all naked truth, and to envisage circumstance all calm,  
That is the top of sovereignty". Keats.

At 24 he had gone further than anyone  
And every panegyric i tried  
Never does justice to his presence  
One more guiltless found guilty  
"A thing of beauty is a joy forever"  
Hang the universe on that.

The sun holds us close to each other  
Witness to our declining circle  
The bond of country weakening  
The earth too small to worry  
Lets hope its grace and kindness  
Can still prevail in a world of numbers.  
Will we still pay attention to the dead  
As tradition passes into history.

Science is neutral they protest  
Thank god poetry is not,  
The information overboils  
The social media exquisite  
In its forensic hopelessness,  
The law seems like a child  
Beneath the weight of darkness  
Of a land without culture,  
Is there an end of it?

Blighty is back on the agenda  
Snow ,ice and rain are the diet  
Before they were part of creation  
Now I'm bored with the weather  
It takes up half the TV.  
Bored with the democratic arguments  
Poetry being the least democratic  
Making logic a metaphor  
And mathematics a co-existence.

XVIII

"Poetry makes nothing happen" Auden

But what of its healing power  
And this is what might save us.  
Now i think of an english church  
Among meadows remote but not desolate  
A metaphor of what is to come  
Often believed by the most unlikely people  
Dorset or Herefordshire come to mind  
Where its silence is only disturbed  
By the rustle of country life,

You find it down a winding lane  
 With all the familiar trees and bushes  
 Even the smell of garlic from Court Barton  
 Comes to the memory of past things.  
 The hedgerow of hawthorns has burst  
 Into its brocades of cream and white and pink  
 The air filled with the light scent  
 Of their adamantine loveliness.  
 Now i am walking down this lane forever  
 Without care and no hope of an ending  
 Towards no known destination  
 As if this walk will turn into an eternal walk  
 To a city which will never be reached  
 But the journey is the city  
 Crossing and recrossing a whole life  
 Which turns out to be nothing but a spiritual life (FK)  
 Here an ascension where time is mercy  
 And is overcome by endless movement upwards  
 As meaning becomes something else.

So the lane winds its hieroglyphic path  
 And shadows all the lessons we need  
 For time has been regained  
 In the remembrance of things past  
 And a sort of perfection found  
 As we clink glasses with the poets  
 Buried in foreign forests, in distant meadows (MR)  
 Death does flower in our patience here  
 And if that flowering bends towards us  
 In a room without walls  
 In a place without air  
 We know this is an annunciation  
 Not an annihilation ...and we have come through.

Finis

(Note where initials are found at the end of a line refers to the idea of that author or occasionally a direct quote- all initials are found among opening quotes).