

7.

The Better Poems of  
John Hewitt

selected from

April 1940 - November 1943

" You can always smell disaster when a poet begins to transcribe; he is garnering in the past; he smells the darkness. Once before, in Ireland, the poets did that in a body - in the 12th century, the age of the great manuscript collections, the leather bound books, the vellum epitaphs, the last will and testament of the men who were waiting for the Normans knocking at the door".

Sean O'Faolain : "King of the Beggars"  
(p.13)

30. IV. 40

lyric

Caesar and Solomon  
imperial and wise  
both are now gone  
with their sonorous lies:  
but Helen, Dido burning,  
Maive the tall Irish queen  
-gaze in the lidless eyes  
between and between  
a fever'd head's turning and turning

3.V.40

## Quiet

I can possess my quiet in the hills  
Abandoned quarry offers me its heart  
among uprooted stones and shattered rocks  
intrepid moss makes effort to restore  
to the green purpose of the rain and sun.

If I have patience birdsong dies away  
the darting martins and the climbing larks  
pass out of sight and hearing. If I go  
too far toward falling water's swirl  
the hanging grasses will intrude and break  
with white jets splashing tilted ledge to ledge  
the mirror surface of my mind. And if  
I scale the cleft there suddenly will sound  
a far wind in dark hotted pine and fir.

So pacing here my twenty yards of chalk  
my part is finished. There is but to wait  
between one birdsong and another song  
for wordless truth I nearly overhear

Somewhere in Europe men were locked in war  
and rocket to crush us from their tilted peaks  
We spoke of urgent things like poetry  
but there were certain things we did not speak

Book

8-9.V.40

## Antrim April

Over the bright-green rich with <sup>butternuts</sup> celandine  
where in the level light of evening  
each frightened lamb distinctly limned with gold  
prolicket heraldic on the scroll of spring

a low mound moated with a brambled ditch  
topped by small plow patch of brown broken sods  
upon its brow among the nettled stones  
goats peering round like old priapic gods

The wild crebapple with no petal yet  
but hinting crimson promise tangled arms  
of cherry spiket with just for cruising bees  
the sycamore ~~that dreams of~~ summer swarms  
prepares for

The blackthorn broods delicately masked  
beside the sky deep stream abrim with rain  
yoke flecks on which the lilted larches hump  
with light green plumes along the tufted lane:

Clady

This was in Antrim walking with my friend  
remarking damson gay the rusty crest  
of beeches tall above the dove grey house  
at April's end when life is lovehest.

Antrim's



Book

9.V.40

The pale efficient masks rack home by bus  
peering at print, are hung in hall with hat,  
or left in bathroom mirrors overnight  
til soap and razor slick them on open.

Bland mask smirks over knife & glancing cup  
ticking new scores to sympathetic mask  
letters inside domestic mattersize;  
but rubber typhens with a slipping snap  
the wearers mumbles, fidgets, disappears,

is found by roared puffing at a pipe,  
or silent slipped tripping after bowls,  
the old crest shiny mask with sagging jaw  
lifted from peg beside the rough tweed coat.

Book  
part 7

11.V

## Interim (an extract)

no longer the high ode rhetorical  
that bids hasten Europe heed my warning call  
the tense messiah meanings built upon  
something I'd hoped for but have never known  
nor the swift fancies flashing into soap  
caught in the dusk before light proved them wrong.

\* Henceforth my slow skill I must only spend  
to phrase affection or to mourn a friend  
to late the convolutions of my thought  
in quiet stanzas delicately wrought  
leaving Keats' color Shelley's crystalline  
skyscape of a humbler land I mean as mine  
stranger to passion never strongly moved  
to those emotions we less not approved  
responsive to the year's flow, spring and fall,  
saluting winter at the end of all  
not with rain or longing to be free  
from the dark textures of mortality  
yet hoping that in twenty years I'll find  
wisdom like Marvell's comfortable mind  
and that my thought and action prove to be  
secure in similar integrity.

## Bookstall

I have fingered all the books in the penny section  
 the tedious sermons the passionless lives of saints  
 the crib to the classics the volume of secular essays  
 the reports on the foreign missions the dead propaganda  
 the verses by magazine poets with obvious rhimes  
 and walking down the alley out of the market  
 between the mahogany dresser and the brand basin  
 the marble bust of Augustus the needlework picture  
 I muse on the vanity of literary endeavor.

Surely there was a moment in the menses  
 between the final sentence and the concordance  
 of sudden light of unaccustomed glory  
 of sheer revelation of life.

Surely a moment  
 when the secular essayist pauses, when the magazine poet  
 tapping his cigarette on the curving initials  
 hears on the edge of earshot a lovely poem  
 that sang in the heart like distant water falling.

Then I recall the moments that sang to my self  
 that shed a sudden glory over visible things  
 and how the color and music has died away  
 leaving only broken words on the scribbled paper.

## Cornerake

In meadow mottled with secret bog  
 the cornerake hidden deep in grass  
 ventulogist that never tired  
 played all his tricks til I should pass:  
 from mound to mound with quiet tread  
 I followed where my hearing led.

So for a minute's breathless space  
 the universe with troubled stars  
 burning to birth or slowing down  
 with shouting men and flaming wars  
 had narrowed to the interval  
 twist step and call and step and call.

## Sonnet: Man's Estate

Here - at town's limits where the grey sheets fray  
 first in green strips laburnum bright and lit  
 with rhododendron bushes that make way

for ledge hatch-folded shoulders which admit  
 white limestone alleys pocket with loads of sand  
 brick heaps and plank-piles gnawing at the green  
 starting new paths thro grass on either hand  
 to captured barrow, waterproof machine.

here at the frontier where the pioneers  
 are offered promise of futurity  
 you own at fifty pounds for twenty years  
 just out of sight behind that butchered tree  
 a clockwork cuckoo calling all day long  
 mocks the prospector with his cynic song.

## Pigeons

Cockpigeons all bearded peck at straws  
 hold them, tilt head & toss the wisps away  
 as tho within slow mind some thought withdraws  
 offered unbest on any proper cause  
 and withered by the scorching light of day.

The hen on ledge above stood with white  
 broods on an egg until her leggy gape  
 perceives some scrap or carton tinsel bright  
 four storeys down, too luring to the sight  
 for her to stay a mother all her days.

But the small pigeons still keep coming on  
 shell smelt on sidewalk, fledgling sprawling dead  
 on sill or step with limbs grotesquely drawn,  
 by cats paw masht into a sticky shawn,  
 circling the done or perch on marble head.

A scholar's verse assured and cool  
 for Jancy first by Maxwell heard:  
 the stanza reaches easy end  
 the turn is deft, the rhimes are full

No more than this for all my care?  
 the measurement of style with style  
 the patience of the wrist and file  
 the crumpled paper's wry despair?

But never once to scan the page  
 with ragged cry of love or pain  
 or line a man might-mouth again  
 to be a scabbard for his rage.

## Abba and Chaos

Abba at chaos hurled a burning shape  
 chaos recoiled defeated giving way  
 to the hot light that bundled up his mists  
 This was the Sun, and Abba was content,  
 his limits leapt and emissary light  
 pinning its legions shining camp by camp

So also Stars and Moon well disciplined  
 guarding the marches charted first demand.  
 Chaos came back here choked a guttering star  
 entranced allegiance of rash meteors  
 froze the bare poles, clamped down his iron foot  
 sealed this and this against advancing order

But Abba patient modified his thought  
 attempted motions complete and new  
 jokes that better than mere plunging light  
 could glance at tangent destiny back as forth  
 the calm full cruising down the baffled gale  
 the brow here keeping home among the broken  
 defying chaos for a certain term  
 each perfect and within the borders drawn  
 stewing life's grace and easy mastery  
 a little while, only the flaming Sun  
 remains the longest triumph of his will.  
 Therefore he ventured forms that could achieve



not the mere shape or face of knotted thought  
but thought itself, himself to multiply  
this consciousness that restless in its turn  
might model form from chaos unresolved

Man caught new sound that had a use before  
birdsong or mating call of hungry cat  
or consequent upon a changing thing,  
rako falling thunder, sea's roar, voice of storm  
made words a music to bind chaos down

Then on a day sent thought into the dark  
shen beyond shapes & qualities of sense:  
it circled round uncertainly in space  
struck abba's face in shadow & surprised  
broke back to mind reporting innocent  
contents & estimations of extent

Abba considered: First my face and bulk  
the seeking deeper may discern my will  
knowing this then may turn away open  
as fold the darkness up drive wedge of light  
into that muddering shapelessness I hate  
til chaos whining crouches at my feet  
as bids me use him wisely for my ends.

So far this instant I may rest content  
altho' this consciousness may also turn

back on itself til thought less beyond thought  
by interbreeding tenacity,  
setting its vitals, nurturing as more  
on the fat stuff of chaos  
and I shall have to trim worn fish or bird  
to fit new angles of being and desire  
within adjusted frames of space and time.

To Any dweller in Lewis Street

And do you know a man was born  
in your short street of brick and slate  
who made his life a simple chart  
that he might keep inviolate

the clean precision of his sight  
for curve of hill & field & tree  
that he might set their colors down  
with delicate economy?

All the tall chimneys hemmed him in  
and gables bound the sky with bars  
he came to his best years between  
two pitiful disastrous wars:

and the hearts of men were torn  
he held his retreat way alone  
and while earth shuddered with despair  
marched mass with mass and tone with tone.

Sticks you tap on stones to recall the dot  
when you went walking in the October twilight.

Assistant Required

The thirty nine year old governess  
leaves the folded newspaper  
on the marble washstand beside the jug & basin  
opens the second drawer in her dressing table  
and jumbles for her references

This may be heard of dull days

Subservient to Mrs. Knox-Mason  
not permitted to be intimate with the servants  
laughing at the Major's stories  
of Fort Sumner and the nuclear witch  
wiping Master Frederick's dribbling mouth  
and moving misting jugs over the lesson book

This may be the end of dull days  
may even be the beginning of a new dullness

Yet a certain ~~repet~~  
for the antlers over the doors  
and the collection of sticks in the hallstand  
straight gnarled & Lolist Sunday sticks  
asplent frayed cane, blackthorn  
sticks that somehow told how people lived  
who didn't mind dullness  
having had hundreds of years to get used to it



7 Finding the Blue Lake: Summer 1938  
 Moune Mountains above Annabon

Passing a gate I stopped to ask the way  
 of a bent farmer grubbing in a field  
 My tall friend with me had been told to point  
 - a certain lough within the barren heights  
 and we had traced the map to the nearest road  
 that ended in a heap of broken stones.

A good three mile the men said straitening  
 but no one goes there now except for yowes  
 shaid mable from the flock in the little hills

So there's no road there nor a track to follow?

No. It passs over nearly all its length  
 But I remember well when I was wee  
 that every Christmas Eve the people went  
 to sail wee hen' boats in it for the sport  
 the young folk that is, for the way is rough  
 an heavy gain if yer on in years

But why?

To sail wee hen' boats.

What's the sense  
 in sailing little boats on Christmas eve?  
 far better stay at home from sleet and snow

and have you fun out round the blazing turf -  
 with songs & stories - dancing if there's room.  
 It must be a deft and bitter place to go  
 in the bad weather winding up the year.  
 Maybe - June if you like - but Christmas Eve?

I cannot tell. I hardly remember now.  
 I am not rightly sure if I ever knew.  
 It was a thing the people always done  
 but give up doin' when I was a lad.

We talked a little more then thinking him  
 stept out to make the journey while the sun  
 still sawy above the cloud frequented peaks  
 clumps over the stone dykes replacing all  
 the little <sup>bigger</sup> stones dislodged in getting over  
 a squelch thro bog cotton on the bleacht long grass  
 jumping the peat tram streams that cut across  
 the netted tussocks & the flat scord rocks  
 my tall friend running steadily ahead  
 I slower pausing now & then to wonder  
 why folks should ever come on Christmas Eve  
 to sail their hen' boats here, & searching back  
 thro all my reading for a reference.

2 1947 Prof. E. E. Evans told me that  
 handbooks were hobby of quarry workers

Knowing little of the Greeks or Romans  
 even their big men in the high days  
 only this translation which for me  
 has always only the flavor of the translation  
 spilled over a tedious mass of commonplace  
 Surrey Dryden Cowley fitting into place  
 with the broad mannerisms of the period

Knowing little of the Greeks or Romans  
 I cannot tell  
 how folk's fact the passing of an epoch  
 whether they held the new order glad to go  
 just to what degree they became degenerate  
 trivial in subject matter cleverly sterile  
 with epitaphs for friends or eulogies  
 for the fat trusting lover that overwhelmed 'em  
 or lamentations for the good days, one  
 nostalgic for the old jokes & titillations  
 the wrinkled cackling whores & the wittier keps  
 the damp squibs of the brilliant evenings  
 or the epigrams that have lost their edge.

Knowing nothing of the Romans or the Greeks  
 I am undecided  
 whether to let my pen repeat & repeat

The supple rhythms I know  
 for faces & places I was happy with  
 or whether to try my teeth on a new music  
 for my terrible sense of fear  
 finding in its lilt a new courage maybe  
 and a bright hope . . . . for other men.

Perhaps a Sumerian had similar thoughts

13.7.40

## Cobweb

For fifteen days my cobweb spun  
from Waterfoot to Cusendun  
has caught and tethered many things  
besides the flies' prismatic wings

The finches crumbing round the door  
bright colored seeds of sycamore  
white bindweeds' flower, the frog low left  
of all save topmost bell bereft  
The wagtails darting on the sand  
The men who hauled the nets to land  
with bladderwrack & crabs & frog  
The black calf's melancholy cry

The boy who shouted he was fit  
to handle horses, cuckoo spit  
upon a weed with leaves gone red  
The rainbow's end on Gannon Head  
The broken rainbow on the sea  
The shape of hyltine & uttered tree  
The cream horse in the thistle field  
The near-hand comerake well concealed  
but just like those I heard at home  
The spilt milk pattern of the foam  
The goose that swaggered head in air

21

and Luripean always there  
save when a black cloud filled the glen  
as into hills up a fountain pen.  
The sky larks singing in the sun  
The great red cawls at Cusendun  
The horse we leapt one afternoon  
where Jidil scrapt a rebel tune

All these and more but over all  
the sounds and scents of Cusendun  
the rooks asserting in the trees  
the privilege of families  
the old familiar reek of peat  
and Turnley's tower where four roads meet.

Now I have market and sorted these  
in all their varied qualities  
I'll find a place to spread them out  
against the months of hungry months of drought  
Thanks to the cobweb net I spun  
from Waterfoot to Cusendun.

## Valediction

Now goodbye to swete of mower  
 cloven thistles nettles mingled  
 with the long grass rain bedabbled  
 - and the smoke among the branches  
 curling from the fire new kindled

And goodbye to sea and seashore  
 to the little slated shelter  
 with the women sitting knitting  
 as the boats above the tide mark  
 and the old men telling stories

So goodbye then to the village  
 to the footmen standing talking  
 with the man from over a mountain  
 man and dog from mist-wrapped over a  
 and the shop that sells tobacco  
 where the small red light is burning  
 always in the smoky kitchen  
 at the image of the virgin

And goodbye to honey suckle  
 with the cuckoo's spit upon it  
 and the meadowsweet as juschia  
 flaring gipsy of the ledges  
 with the angry blood drop earrings

and the leafy wall of apple  
 spreading right across the roadway  
 standing upright you may reach them  
 but they still are green and bitter  
 sketch that cottage with the turf stacks  
 up against the whitewash gable  
 and the reaper standing idle  
 tyres a-brim with yellow water  
 and the rake upon the haystack  
 and the half moon yellow misted  
 high above the flat topped mountain  
 and the colored fields of Garrow  
 when the rain blew off & skewed them  
 shining emerald and yellow

I have been your friend & neighbor  
 for a stolen spell of summer  
 sun & rain more rain than sunshine  
 so with unwillingly I leave you  
 for the roaring gritty city  
 with the gossips and the rumour  
 and the faces pale and anxious  
 waiting for the certain raider  
 waiting for the sure invader  
 paper strips across the window

Tho my city surely perish  
 man & nature shall not perish

There will blossom from the ashes  
thistles nettles even juschia  
and a man may find an order  
black upon his aimless living  
drawn from nature & abstracted  
from the motion of the seasons.

I would have a race of joiners  
plowmen teachers electricians  
everyone potential artist  
wiring circuits writing poems  
with the weather in their faces  
and the seasons passing over  
giving nourishment & purpose  
to their generous endeavor.

## Letter from America

Now the war's worst days begin  
certain comfort walls us in:  
we are glad we took the trip  
from the crater's crumbling lip.

Back in Europe Oslo fell,  
Brussels, Amsterdam as well,  
and the French recriminate  
their way into a fascist state.

While the flood of danger crawls  
up London Bridge and Derry's walls,  
Sploory, Pobblehob and I  
sit here safely high and dry.

Sploory teaches in a school  
where Oxford accent is the rule;  
Pobblehob is bickering  
with Sam Goldwyn's second string

Rows of Yankees round me stand  
keen to shake the poet's Land:  
on this sea of vacant faces  
I must smear my commonplaces

But we often sit and think

of the wenches and the drink  
and the merry times when we  
praised us on the B. B. C. ;  
but the lust for life prevails  
and we've had to trim our sales.

You have felt the death wish too  
staying where it may come true,  
but lust for life has sterling worth  
in the safest place on earth.

So we toast you once before  
you hear the gun-bolt on the door.

It would be better not to be a poet  
and turn our hearts & minds to time's demands  
to have no more than we men's work and know it  
with rifles in our unencumbered hands

It is a bad thing now to be a poet  
when people have no leisure for our verse  
when the tired heart needs song but dare not steal it  
caught in mad days and dreading even worse

Before this time the chiefly disregarded  
always we found a friend or two to praise  
and in some measure thought ourselves rewarded  
for the tense anguish of creative days

But now our friends are dumb or come not, scattered  
by call and retreat, by coilup of the war  
The little fences round our peace are shattered  
and our late talk-packet sessions are no more.

We might continue hoping that our labor  
be wells against the drought & found again  
when man shall use to succor his spent neighbor  
our ancient rapture wrung from love and pain

But even that slow hope in dark maturing  
chance bomb or shrapnel may eliminate  
not only us but what we thought enduring  
against the hardest knotes of careless fate





## Translations from Voltaire

## Epitaph

The world has lost Penelope  
 who please God and art a trust.  
 The gods who gave so lavishly  
 forgot to add eternal youth.

## Epigram (Jean Treron)

The other day by chance I saw  
 a rattlesnake like Evelyn Waugh,  
 and wondered long what night betide  
 until the snake curled up and died.

## Epigram

27.VI

That lachrymatory adept  
 old Jeremiah wept and wept  
 foreseeing with prophetic eye  
 whom he would be translated by.

## Midsummer Past

The white hens gather patient at the gate  
 The two white geese pass arrogantly thro  
 the husk assembly <sup>cross at</sup> subby being late.  
 The waterbutt beside the kitchen door  
 with last night's shower near full, holds all the blue  
 a low sky of mudges - from a sycamore  
 a pale leaf twists and spins thro the warm air  
 falters and drops and floats securely there.

The roses overbloom along the well  
 with scorcht brown edges let curled petals fall  
 on the crackle dusty earth. A yellow snail  
 ventures from ditch lush grass to cross the road;  
 and there are spiders on the last turf loam,  
 grey cobwebs on the rusty square cut nail.

## Sonnet

By the sea's edge on gravel and on sand  
 I pace at leisure marking out with care  
 the steps of one unknown before me there  
 and weighing colored stone with idle hand  
 while flint or veined pebble that the land  
 surrenders to the ocean's wear and tear  
 and ~~by~~ some magic I am pledged to share  
 in a vast peace I do not understand

Tonight an empire lurches to decay  
 its mode of thought and living growing stale  
 yet free from gasping rumor of dismay  
 or threat of fate I careless pace the shore  
 where the great waters beat with endless roar  
 and Carthage is a clean forgotten tale.

## Custardum

And where the valley opens to the sea  
 with white west rock and weed from estuary  
 where grey gulls face the wind along the sand  
 a tall man mends his net with nimble hand

## Ocean

6. VII

I sit here gazing at the tranquil bay  
 as slow waves curl and crumple on the shore  
 and grieve for all the things I cannot say  
 they have been said so many times before.

## Grey &amp; White

12. VII

Grey sea, grey sky  
 two things are bright:  
 the gull - white foam  
 the gull foam white.

Somet

## The Guess

2/3. VII

At the door of the bus waiting room they stood  
two farmers late returning from the fair  
they talked of how the prices offered there  
were, all in all, considered very good  
they spoke about the war, the cost of food  
what further taxes they might have to bear  
of Shaw abandoned of Pat Kelly's mare  
and the distressing scarcity of wood.

All this with certain lack of interest  
repeating phrases they had heard all day  
till one, the smaller, gave a chuckling laugh  
and told the other how he'd rightly guessed  
the weight of the Turnley's Dolly Mary  
She was eleven hundred - and a half.

33

3. VII

## Glendun

I saw the valley fetch by colored fetch  
holatols oats and grazing flax and hay  
the white west horses with rain shabby stetch  
the bigger horses slated blue and grey  
the shorn sheep nibbling round the mounds of gorse  
the red calves at the gate, the lonely horse,  
and one man rowing slow across the bay.

I thought of Europe, of the broken fate  
that hung about us ready to descend  
my generation curst unfortunate  
and waiting for a miserable end  
each step regretted as it nearer came  
the uselessness of the apportioned blame  
my failure or the failure of each friend.

and walking in this valley in July  
I made a prayer who do not often pray  
living by no revealed philosophy  
but by slow knowledge scabbled day by day  
that when fate strikes God should in mercy spare  
from the abysmal thraldom of despair  
this little valley and this quiet bay.

4/5. V11

## Retrospect

I have of course spoken repeatedly of these days  
having been correct in my analysis all along  
having seen the sickness follow its appointed course  
thanks to the proper books.

I have solicited support for the Peace Ballot  
that was, looking back, too much an affair of Church Halls;  
speaking in Co-op Guilds & to Youth Organisations  
being commended by the rector.

wrote letters to the press protesting demanding  
attended committees with professors and comrades  
simple track mind colluding with simple track mind  
and I not handy with the synthesis.

Yes, we have scuffled with rowdy undergraduates  
showering leaflets, eager to break up our meeting  
and later nodded to them in the Gymnasium  
applying for a commission.

I remember a persuasion I pronounced  
in an upstairs room to a branch of the engineers  
even the treasurer counting the weekly dues  
supported the resolution.

These days when I lectured on Art and Poetry

35

I always without fail dragged in my King Charles's head,  
was betrayed often into flamboyant gestures,  
but was nevertheless sincere.

I remember the Basque dancers and their costumes,  
and taking the tickets - at doors of draughty halls;  
Manolo skylark with a morbid love for foreign stamps  
Aurora dancing; Dolores dismal.

I remember the times I made for the People's front  
debates with the P.P.U. and the Labor Party  
my wife busy addressing disheated circulars  
packing clothes and soap for the refugees.

Yes, we saw it coming. The black cloud spreading  
and then the little wave of Austrian and German Jews  
some flashy like local furniture dealers, others gentle  
seldom talking of Buchenwald.

At Munich time in the days of the Lambeth Walk  
I remember the hll before the thunderstorm  
and how tears came into my eyes when I saw the first  
sandbags round the city hall.

I even remember sitting alone one midnight  
when my wife was snatching a day or two at the coast  
hearing the radio reporting mobilisation  
and men marching to closed frontiers.

and how for half an hour I was lonely and sad  
thinking of my wife & our busy years together  
& the time we had spent on committees writing good  
and talk of Massine and Dali

our hopes for me: a host the men marching were marching  
against the flimsy frontiers of poetry and art  
& when at last in September the war came  
we breathed easily again.

It began almost exactly as we had foreseen  
but sooner than expected - the party line wobbled  
& tho we were not in the party we wobbled too  
the dialectic not rooted deep enough

& how we feared at the businessmen's war of blockade  
& reconnaissance flights until with Spring the ice broke  
& Norway & Holland (just names) & Belgium (Mumline)  
went flat under the Nazi tanks

we began to take things a little more seriously  
my wife involved in plans for evacuation  
my chief concern for the future of my verses  
dropping copies at safe addresses

and the ARP the badge the triangular bandage  
the decency of ordinary people caught surprised  
in a earnest comradeship of reports & sketches

& our friends among the german refugees

And then we stole off for a brief holiday  
snatching a heath of green fields & tangled hedgerows  
men cutting hay with scythes rooks carving wild roses  
walks along the sand

deckchairs & the sunshine between the showers  
moving among people who didn't believe in the war  
caught in a fantastic tangle of race & creed &  
geographical isolation.

And we were very much in love with each other  
in the easy way of tested successful marriage  
loving the same things well written books & jokes  
& the color of wild flowers

And then a telegram came recalling my wife  
to take her expected place in the organisation  
& we decided I was to remain a little longer  
with the seagulls & the sheepshead

and that chapter came to a balanced & shapely end  
with a wave of the hand as the bus went round the corner  
& I walked up the hill to the house among the trees  
to my books & verses again.

## Desert Cactus

5/7/40

Arthur Putnam (Californian sculptor) speaks  
circa 1914 AD

You damned reporters always get my goat  
trying to pickle a life in a double column  
with blacker type for the bits we'd like to forget  
but I'm in the mood tonight for a stretch of talk  
so I'll tell you more than you may care to use

Of course I was a lazy boy at school  
played Lookey broken down fences fell from trees  
one time when I was nine was may be the cause  
of my retirement from the sculptor's craft  
Yes he retired for good - It's truer to say  
that art retired from me. But let that pass.  
You probe that point and I'll be quarrelsome  
So careful kid. Lay off the tropical stuff  
Reminds me, there's a bottle in that box  
a neighbor brought it with some other junk  
to help a lovely wretch to forget  
his friends a triumphs - most of all his friends  
to enjoy the dismal company of his soul.

I used to think the soul was the shape of a ham  
a yellow ham you'd see hung up in a store  
and even now I am not sure I'm wrong

I never could adapt myself to school  
for they used words there when I wanted things  
that you could pull apart to see how they worked  
like frogs or spiders. Did you learn at school  
just how to pick a tarantula up  
safely like this on the back with finger & thumb?  
Yet you can count way up into the thousands  
divide & multiply - there's a dirty joke  
just peeking over the rim of my lazy mind.  
I trapped pumes once at twenty dollars a time.  
Drifted into surveying where I found  
in the clear places in the woods at night  
the delicate forms he tried to recreate  
with these two hands in clay & stone & bronze  
Bronze casting! Was that ever taught at school?  
Would teach you all the chemistry you'd need.  
I had to work the whole thing up myself  
It's later learned a deal from Luigi Gatta  
but that was when I'd got over the stiffest bits  
could make a job of it - or so they say.

Now art. We're onto art. It's safer ground  
that the thick swamps of personality  
I know for instance never to trust a friend  
He'll do you down - just out of jealousy  
but not vindictive just his lesser nature  
that he can't help. I had good friends. I thought  
joke I was kind to, glad to help a bit

and they all did me down pretending that  
it was to help me to become myself  
as if ever I was anybody else  
even now when I am only half a man  
But the half that works O Boy, and never guess  
the nasty things the half that's left can do.

But art now. Well, you see the muck we make  
the crawling creatures & the bounding things  
I put break into. God & I are buddies  
but so far he has got the wider range  
including shapes I'd never set my hand to  
Not that I blame him. Artists take no sides  
all's one to them, the preacher or the lecher  
He often makes those one, in point of fact.

Then I was working well up to my sketch,  
was getting what I wanted & where I wanted  
It's they tried the scent of Europe to draw me off  
the slick Italian finish, the French finesse  
the sugary buggery shapes of the wisping boys  
but I had harder stuff. The coiling life  
stirring under the hide. A lump of clay -  
I'd make it crouch & scream or leap & kill  
but the little fellows living under my shadow  
haunters of candy cartoons & calendars  
were just plain scared of life. So they set their  
They had a surgeon butcher to open my skull

& scoop out the very bit where my genius lay  
like you'd core an apple before you ate it  
the part that belonged to the tree & the sleeping seeds  
just that they wrestled out of me to leave  
good succulent sexless stuff they'd batter on.  
But the old tree mockt em. I am still a man.

O yes my art! But this is the pith of it:  
the animal moving easily under the skin,  
the living squirming sweating laughing thing  
you put a shirt on so it doesn't scare you.

Yes I have been abroad. You got it down  
sold troupes to the stiffest shirts in Paris  
played in a family orchestra in Rome  
with mandolin guitar & castanets  
to drown my benji plugging from the west.  
Yes sir they were good folks, good honest folks  
rank garlic eaters, fond of wine & olive  
not like these dust veined Yankees. For they lie  
who say we should be stringy dry & tough:  
the cactus - that's my totem's fat & clean  
but has its prickles too & does it need them?

And so I live alone on Ocean Beach  
in a crazy shanty without a relative.  
My wife & kids are somewhere in the States;  
my mother too. But I'm in eternity

where I belong & where they can't come near  
Grace came to see me but I bawled her out  
her & the frightened kids. My sister's a fool  
But there are other women who are kind  
are not afraid to give eternity  
the little moments that they have for souls.

I had a wife once but I drove her out  
she tried to help me but I grew afraid  
that I might strangle her. And so did she.

I had good friends who tried to meet the price  
the cunning herlot life placed on her charms  
but she has hurt me. I must surely die  
having enjoyed some moments to excess  
must rot by inches who could touch to life.

There, take my little plaster tiger cub  
It may remind you later of a man  
that made a living thing that ate him up

Get out now or by Christ I'll murder you  
and put that bottle down. I got a thirst.

## Weather

after a sunset of magnificence  
undisciplined, a boisterous play of hue;  
the vast sky scabbled with winds' violence,  
the headland orange, sea a turquoise blue,  
and far horizon mauve that shades away,  
bearing a rainbow shaft abrupt, to grey;

the next day follows in a mist of rain  
that never ends but breaks in frequent shower  
lashes the leaves to fungus, fills the lane  
with gurgling runnels, beating down the hay,  
as the wind alters with each dismal hour  
that yawns across a wasted holiday.

On the third day the low sky is dome of cloud  
that crams the valley, hides the mountain crest  
& mingles with the sea now rough & loud  
with cold bleak breakers on its tumbled breast  
that strike the shingle with a dragging roar  
& spill brown foam upon the wind bare shore.



11.12.13-7

## A Meditation on Pain

When harsh occasions flout its easy faith  
in generosity of providence  
That seem to give even to untimely death  
the sign & value of intelligence  
When good men suffer while the world goes on  
its ox-dull way & will not turn aside  
save passing but to mark the crucified  
or flip the thoughtless stone  
then a man must endure  
the thronging torments of time's wilderness  
assess & re-assess  
the little truth of which he still is sure.

This then is true whatever else may fail  
distorted turn to poison or avail  
no more against the cuffs & buffetings  
flashed from the unconscious qualities of things  
the only human absolute is pain.

That man is cursed who willingly allows  
his hand or others that he might restrain  
to press the bloody crown upon the brows  
or knock with trouble at a good man's house

No universe could offer grace or love  
for men to cherish if these were not weighed

on the long balance of each opposite  
Our senses need to tremble & be afraid  
t'account the hang & place the joy above  
or choose the lesser joy for lack of wit  
the pang accepted till the joy be won  
joy known as joy but by comparison

I granted the schoolman's point. But life is such  
that from the things of nature griefs enough  
to bruise or wound endure from sharp or rough  
from flame & water chance of sea or sky  
the pain that flows along the tracks of touch  
hand touch tongue touch & touch of ear & eye  
to these add aught & it is sudden overmuch.

Men lives to men not only thro the loins  
that chain him to the apt by dark degrees  
the very nature of creation joins  
his breath & fortune to their qualities:  
the objects of his passion also these.

No frosty isolation of a tower  
can sketch the canvas for his scope or power.

Yet men must live within a world of things  
things seeming lifeless to his narrow eyes  
things having motion, having form or wings  
to set the outer limits to his skies

things he may give an order that supplies  
decreasing comfort till the hour he dies.

He learns to judge a estimate at length  
the hunt a nurture a the work a strength  
of every features' ripples he may start  
by the scord disk within his single heart  
that marks the balancit curves they may be make  
or jagged rhythms of failure or mistake.

It is enough for him  
to thread his patient steps with anxious care  
thro' th' intricate air  
of wakened being and the steep cliffs of dream

No other man dare claim  
by law or right or any other name  
to thrust between him a his own intent  
with Lains' impediment  
eratic shot from an event  
that never has been his  
to which he neither signald war or peace.

This then the keystone of the arch  
whereover men may march or countermarch  
with resolution undiverted, free  
to seek the bonnie his senses urge him find  
where he may yet  
only the

## Out of My Time

I set myself a threefold task  
to try my suppleness of mind:  
first, from behind a haunted mask  
to imitate another's thought  
by logic of his nature signd:  
and then to tell a story caught  
leaves dropping over ancientry  
with competent simplicity

and then to map a tract of thought  
that coils a spun within my brain  
at recent moments a unsought:  
a brief analysis of pain.  
These things I've done as well or ill  
as I have had the wit a stall;

and resting now I hope I can  
declare with something near to pride  
I am an honest journey man  
apprentice long, but qualified  
to do whatever job may come  
'twixt my forefinger a my thumb.

## Glenaniff &amp; Parkmore.

Go to Glenaniff, if you'd know this antrim  
from Waterfoot's wide street of limestone wells  
with the broad sandbanks where the children play  
and the gulls cry among the willow washing.

So to Glenaniff, take the rising road  
the curving road that hugs the northern slope  
that winds & rises up among the trees  
and spreads the little valley flat below:  
the corn & grazing trimmed & well defined  
by the dark lines of hedges: here & there  
the grey gleam of a lane from farm to farm  
the houses white & slated neat as toys  
the river like a restless snake that darts  
from cover of the clothed mats of growth.  
The valley's other side is ribbed with streams  
that fall a long like broken rods of glass  
unheard against the greater central roar.  
The road still clambers up till on the right  
your eye is level with wet boles of trees  
and on the left below in a well of air  
often mist curdled, ranks of pointed firs  
then suddenly the way is broken banked  
where hazels clothe the steeping slope with green  
and turning left across a high stone bridge  
the glen lies wide to the west <sup>east</sup> beyond the hills

Thro' close tangle hearing louder now  
the water roar: above its breathless fall  
the river is a bog brown mountain stream  
cruising & cresting over rocks & moss.

You reach the open country. Wide & bare  
the rounded hills spread far as eye can draw  
with great turfstacks built wedge-like to the west  
in farther fields not easily defined  
if stacks or cattle grazing in the mist  
a place man never tilled or cut for hay  
the seasons only marked by snow or sun

The raw earth gasht with water cups the sky  
with grey clouds moulded cold & desolate  
a shaggy mountain sheep, great horned sheep  
browse in the rain combed grass or shelter close  
to the stone walls that march across the hills  
Here is the lonely station of Parkmore  
deserted now, grass rank along the track  
hardly a tree, a dwelling here & there  
grim as a fortress in debated land  
with pens well fenced but empty like a fair  
with all the stir gone from its naked stalls  
maybe a mare with foal a light brown  
will gallop to a gap to see who pass.

The road dips westward. Suddenly you come

51  
on narrow fields of corn fantastic green  
in the broad landscape where no color is bright  
Houses well thatched with elder bush a jowl  
replace the grey bleak barns where shepherds live  
nose numerous: you may count five at once.

The earth grows friendly with well hedged fields  
kneedeep cows moving in the seeded grass  
shorn sheep neat headed lacking the wild horn  
and children staring over a privet fence  
Trees shade the road awhile: slow running brooks  
brushing the long grass edges as they flow  
haystacks broad based & flax wind buffeted  
potatoes flowering: beans in heavy leaf  
Earth wears the shapes of use in color & curve.

You reach the frontier at the swollen Braid  
a well tilled country prosperous & mild  
the heart contented now & riding easy  
secure in the slow customary things  
that man has set against the rock & fallow;  
but you already know it a lesser joy  
then the bare moors beneath a heavy sky  
where rock & sheep & stream are timeless forms  
and Finn may raise his cry on any hill.

So you have traveled far from Waterfoot

not market & metres but in rhythm of pulse  
the heart uplifted with the mounting kees  
and falling waters, scooped out of the air,  
and gapped beneath you as you stop to look:  
uplifted from the transience of life  
and held at level of lusty ecstasy  
as if with gull's straight keel you pass  
to the rest silence of unmastered earth.

Consider Wordsworth in his wretched age  
his high song over in ten eager years  
the chill words spilled upon the barren heape  
that bring no joy or armistice from tears  
Yet the old hand set long in habit now  
must rime and stanga every trivial dawn  
must lift the silver locks and press the brow  
contemplative altho the gleam is gone

Consent to pity bidding others rise  
with face a fortune warm with flush of youth  
and pass their images before your eyes  
interrogating each for utter truth  
the sea borne Skelley and the conching lad  
the ranting gaffer and the limping lord  
and Owen whispering to the deaf and mad  
with blood smeared lip his pitiable word

These by the limits of their fevered blood  
could pour no more into the glatted horn  
for they had savored every altitude  
potential in the stars when they were born  
The end of each lay coiled within the glass  
whose fault the crystal held a central flaw?  
Who what more convolutions could they pass?  
Who heard the watcher whisper what he saw?

What then of those who had the will bend  
the reiveless complications of the cord  
the person Chatterton without a friend  
the drug sick poet leaping over board?  
The death within those wills but planted firm  
the maggot in the music; you shall see  
the lovely architecture of the worm  
in coral cast of white sterility.

The way on this: to take what fate may grant  
a singing summer and a barren fall  
and empty ~~night~~ <sup>winter</sup> nights when ignorant  
the heart owls round its own memorial  
on the white glory of the crested wave  
rock market, that cannot reach the level shore  
but lifts its height a breakers & finds its grave  
light caught an instant, lost for ever more

on the pale face that winces at defeat  
and will not brave the logic of despair:  
among the thousand masks that throng the street  
the many eyes of one who does not care  
because he knows by heart his span & reach  
and estimates the chances time may give.  
The crafty seaman by the bloody ditch  
hard dead men's drivel and prefers to live.

## Oasis

The sitting bags sag from the sills  
with sprouting growth and fungus stains,  
by passers' feet one yawn or spillo  
red dirt or pebbles mixt with sand.

Observe the patterns on the glass  
of tape and paper that repeat  
crisscross and complicated stars  
untested yet but very neat:

The sticky labels everywhere  
that bid us watch our highest word  
desist enlist or disappear  
tear coupon off or sign the card,

are stuck across the yawning gaps,  
the fissures in the nation's walls.  
No name appears upon the maps  
but rumor confidently tells.

The grief of China & grief of Spain  
so long endured have swept my power  
that the kept honors of the hour  
shall not so strongly move again.

When Paris fell I heard a thought  
for boulevard and gallery:  
the boredom of some prophecy  
since Guadalupe has been fought  
acts like a person on the heart  
that leaves me listless, unconcerned  
aware that history has not learned  
the exquisite surprise of art.

17.8.

## Sonnet: Analysis

When self by self the man is stripped away  
 The self of speech and thought whose every word  
 is signed and dated by the time of day  
 the page or parley when it first occurred  
 and the slow self of habit walking round  
 the threatening ladder rising for the task  
 a knot of muscles exquisitely bound  
 by borrowed sinews to a family mask,

The self that gazes on the lettered leopards  
 turns from the jumble seeking silver glass  
 that in its green recesses still may keep  
 some record of the eyes that saw them pass:

but there is nothing to repeat the glance  
 and offer hope of vague continuance

25.8.40

57

## Audit

I have lived well enough, have known delight  
 delight of senses wide to the living touch  
 of senses glad to serve and nurture such  
 and more because of the promise of day or night  
 of the mood mastered or renewed again  
 for my own heart if not for other men.

I have gone wisely, if a nervous care  
 be kin of wisdom, lest by thought or act  
 the unkind pleasures reeled in fact  
 should lay an unkind coil of passion bare  
 preferring so to walk that there by me  
 should also move in quiet amity

Blame me as craven then that has not dared  
 the shoals or spurs of passionate release  
 but loved the ample valley's mutual peace  
 more than the doubtful tempest's wonder shared  
 with some chance traveler halting by my side  
 and in his sudden moment glorified

My path was cast within a web of wars  
 when the world shuddered lurching out of shape  
 and the tripped millions died, but my escape  
 seems certified by my ascendant stars  
 and in the tumult suddenly ~~so~~ apart

Heart:  
I kept the brooding measure of my stride

and yet not unaware as one who goes  
blind among blades miraculously sure  
like fish thro' coral doubling back secure  
as the vast heedless current heedless flows;  
each danger flung its shadow on my mind  
and by its pity my slow scale defers:

The griefs of nations not good but weighed  
against the private worth of naked joy:  
the balance struck save judge I could employ  
when sheer event might gape it me afraid,  
to set me safe as touch my forward stride  
out of the thunder down the mountainside.

These from my days by luck approved or birth  
now in my prime assess for permanence  
in a child instant of tall violence  
that threats with josses a cloud of death  
the latent frontiers I have spied & planned  
round the mild covers of familiar land.

5.9.40  
59

I think that words will not sing any more  
in the harsh days.

A man who waits for something  
whistles disjointedly and looks about him  
He has no heart for the full song.

Let us then concern ourselves  
with the shite witty couplet  
that may win a half attentive laugh  
and the broad joke that needs no analysis

It is no use being nostalgic  
and scalding our hearts with old melodies  
that recall the good days  
that will but make the present harshness worse

There will be occasion for the full song later on  
for some, at any rate:  
let us then gracefully yield them that privilege  
for ourselves creative effort is impossible



6.9.40

I talked and raged and planned  
I prayed when it was due  
I tried to understand  
The scammed modern crew  
Til with the years I grew  
A stranger in the land

and now I turn within  
and find in my own heart  
The peace I longed to win  
That armors me apart  
making my private art  
my lonely discipline

61  
6.9.40

An old man walking in the falling leaves  
stick tapping harsh on stone a dumb on leaf  
saw where his shuffling head cropt into stir  
in pale september sun: a gay old man

What chance that I shall walk in falling leaves  
when years have given richness to my thought  
and all the crowded pity of the world  
brushes my cuff like autumn offering peace  
and the dead sleep of winter for desire?

Trees Along University Road

We in our time have seen the hard white light  
glare from the screen across the coring ~~and~~  
have sunk in plush to watch the dreary flight  
of black shawled figures over cobbled road  
have seen the plastered crater in the square  
the great flats shatters like a rubble load

Wedge twist the features flashing gun and glass  
the blank ideal faces as the fun  
we've spent five minutes watching raiders pass  
great ripid condors while the streets beneath  
write maggot hatch, and coolie costumes run  
to fill the babbling screen with eyes and teeth

Now in our time the night is full of noise  
the landmarks perish as the people die  
and we who did not heed the warning voice  
stand waiting voiceless, lost, without a guide  
as the shrill siren gives its roaring cry  
and for our jolly we are crucified.

## The Graph

Innocent as a peasant I might make my songs  
of the casual chances of the season  
the immediate concerns and gossip <sup>on the beer-st</sup> lilted neatly  
became a laugh by the crossroads of an evening

and these would be good useful songs of the social man  
with their corner to minds well furnished with love  
even the little songs I sang to myself in the dusk  
would be heard over the hedge and repeated.

But its my verse gives no delight a less no use  
for a group beyond the range of a single voice  
I am not deterred but daily keep my accounts  
with the fluctuating appearances I observe

rather like the drum attached to a barometer  
that is marked in purple ink by a dragging pen  
recording the decline of a culture beginning to crawl  
for the glinting lenses of an antiseptic future.

19.10.40

Of old when men were in husht jeopardy  
or danger swung above a life they lovd  
blew scorching on the little threshing limbs  
and chill upon the white face clencht in sleep  
they bartered with despair and proferd vows  
a cup a mass the first born of the house  
their hearts luggd lockets: and the crisis fled.

What shall I offer now? The modes of chance  
have lost the plink and gestures to respond  
I spell no code or index to placate  
the mubbling terror hung above the roof

If I survive, if those I love outlast  
imagind torments brovd on half the earth  
the things I'd offer woud seem jethison

14.11.40

65

That stoopt man Mark my father's grandfather  
with the hooket jewish rose that reappeard  
in my bad uncle, died so long ago  
I cannot now assess my debt to him.  
My father's worth I know and have declared  
yet somehow poor in passion I am kin  
to honesty and health and little more.

I woud make gestures Keyd to rhetoric  
bow to applause and flesh affection back  
like a steel mirror but I am constrained  
by a chill mind that's frosted by a break  
blown from a barren place far back in time.

At least must end unable to sip nite  
the hearts about me with a warming fire  
that might have loost my limbs or freed my thoughts  
that pad the cell frustrated, into joy  
sun's joy that to my careful happiness  
to noon's bright arden to the timid moon

15. 11. 40

Now at this moment when the world breaks up  
with only islands left and shattered rafts  
to trace and pace familiar motions on  
and daily these <sup>shrink</sup> grow shallow plank by plank  
none but the smallest gestures possible  
mere twitchings and collisions on a slide

The sick dove moults and has no heart to count  
her wing beats twist the ark and Anarat.

Show the flood tunnel from the brown droued earth  
who dare foretell how long til life take root?  
or does spring loiter by the sagging tide  
eager to arch her leaves across the streams?

24. 11. 67

## Comment on Verse

These are the surface shapes upon my mind  
stems floating mid reflections of the sky  
darting or cruising indolently blind  
that leave no lasting angles in the eye

The stones beneath, dark basalt, flint or lime,  
scoured by the passing waters smooth and round  
that wear the faintest signature of time  
in their slow sculptured strength my peace is found.

## The Steamer

Tonight november ending by the fire  
I suddenly remember another time  
a gap of twenty years, an interval  
too full of gestures & words & moving shapes  
to swim at ease in leisurely with grace  
better to leap outright to the sunny bank.

I find no adequate reason to remember  
the sunburnt cliff top tilting to the sea  
thick barred with Hawthorn ledges where the fields  
are stacked in early summer and the beans  
cluttered with wagging pods and the sky blue.  
A month of drought, with barrels slopping over  
as the cart jolted from the three mile well  
and the men moved to get the bluestone spray  
over the green potatoes. Every day  
just after one o'clock I ran from the house  
to lean on a gate and watch the steamer pass  
with yellow funnel leaning back to the smoke  
that tumbled dragged a lump in the scorching air  
always was early to perceive its bow  
cutting great scores of white round spray filled  
watching the tense length shoot full into view  
as it heard the rocky edge & disappeared  
veque breath of smoke among the other trails  
on the sea's limit passing north & south

Why should I remember that ship nor give a care  
for the cargoes she carries nor if still afloat  
sold to the Swedes or battered into scrap  
in some faint hungry town of white faced men?  
Why should I remember this for twenty years?  
No symbols offered. She does not represent  
a quiet regular world of holidays  
I have other motifs for that, treeslope or hills'  
voices in lanes & seeds upon the grass.  
I do not need that hull with the folding smoke  
to remind me I grow old in a crazy world.

memory of July 1921  
Mulleghaun.

## Salute to Matthew Arnold.

None in these days shall catch my limping fault  
 when violence overmasters gentleness  
 when those who had capacity to bless  
 are smothered roughly in a common death

I find no comfort in the carpenter  
 the ease renouncing prince the courteous sage:  
 it was a leisured world assured their weep  
 now in an ebbing age  
 that scarce can turn for appraising glance  
 no little ranting master of despair  
 can fix its pity with his nervous lance:  
 but graver masters eloquent and wise  
 must surely phrase our frantic obsequies.

Not then for me the poet of the night  
 dread haunted, followed by the restless feet  
 who curst the bland illusion of the light  
 and gibbered at the shadows in the street  
 not him who by inversion of his faith  
 could find the satisfaction to blaspheme  
 and taunt indifferent approaching death  
 to satiate his terror with a cruel dream.

Rather I choose the calm defeated man  
 who from his anxious bitterness of Reent

could grasp existence in a steady plan  
 assay it boldly with unflinching art  
 and patiently define  
 its endless flux in an immortal line.

It was no Eden. It was far from perfect  
 with things to fret the sense & vex the mind  
 but there was comfort in it, ease & grace  
 and we are now shut out. A flaming sword  
 not only burns as warding sentinel  
 but threatens our very heads with scorching swings  
 forbidding our return and even making  
 our forward progress grim & tentative.

Yet these were Eden days had we but known  
 prone on the sand dunes gazing at the sky  
 letting chill water from the mountain streams  
 refresh our ankles & our beaded wrists  
 talking at leisure, planning circumstance  
 that would unleash the happy qualities  
 we have no room for on our smoldering sod  
 more precious now because improbable.

Could we have known - at birth by prophecy  
 the script our lives must follow and the stage  
 our actions throw a foolish shadow on  
 would we have turned from life's imperilled light?

Three frantic decades lean with violence,  
 great hurtling mad convulsions in their tides  
 uprooting stable things & smothering  
 all gentle feeling in their general woe  
 murdering the throoping peoples in the streets  
 mocking the lonely crofter's board with want  
 choking the coolie in his paddy field  
 making the long term scholarship absurd  
 & art an aimless scribble in the dirt.

Validictory lines to my W. E. A  
Students

When darkness narrowed on our anxious days  
& none dare hope beyond the midnight stroke  
we came together from our threatened ways  
two score or odd & ordinary folk  
eager to seize what comfort lay in art  
for the vexations of the troubled heart.

We watcht the subtle elements unfold  
the elegance of balance & design,  
the warm romantic arabesque, the cold  
precision of the thoughtful classic line  
the skill unerring & the 'unflinching eye  
that snatches wisdom from mortality

The gentle monk of Florence innocent  
the frantic Dutchman setting all on fire  
the banker's son aloof & diligent  
who sought the cone the cube the cylinder  
Claude Monet making even shadow bright  
& Rembrandt peering thro' the jailing light

The courtly painter to the Spanish King  
who drew his master & his master's fool  
the people's painter Courbet swaggering  
& cynic Degas at the dancing school

These, these & many more whose patient gaze  
made permanent the pageant of their days

Now having argued & debated long  
we've grown a noisy company of friends  
no whit agreed on what is right or wrong  
but somehow sorry that the session ends  
where with opinion's privilege we were free  
with the best gestures of democracy.

So when the future opens at our feet  
let us go bravely on our careful ways  
secure above the terror of defeat  
and the loud tumult of triumphant days  
wise in emotion, qualified by art  
to the high purpose of the human heart.



My escale insulation is complete ;  
 two layers of life between me & the street :  
 life alien to mine & all concerned  
 with certain habits I have never learned.  
 The street itself so far from typical  
 oasis bounded by an ivied wall,  
 with tree on pavement & a wedge of grass  
 too narrow for the tides of life to pass  
 with sandstone pillars & mute folded gates  
 & ponderous information on brass plates.

Here from my window I can still survey  
 the glimmering changes of a winter day  
 dawn on the rooftops feeble sun at noon  
 a wind scoured sunset & a crescent moon  
 a just of starlings a stray single gull  
 heading for sea unhurried beautiful  
 & when the discipline of early night  
 withdraws the smoky chimneys from the sight  
 the world outside persists in hooting train  
 & sudden footsteps running thro' the rain.

I cannot make a song tonight  
 the words are numb my wits are dull  
 I write & cancel what I write  
 & yet my days are so less full  
 of thought affection & delight  
 than when of old my singing heart  
 achieved the ecstasy of art.

And if I make another song  
 with rhythm to staunch the flow of time  
 reverberant as a beaten gong  
 and rich as un-forgotten rhyme  
 to whom then should the grace belong  
 save unto her whose gestures give  
 mute evidence whereby men live?

## The Witch

Inside the porch there hung a bunch of wrack with just of salt upon it, and the man who lived within came out a looker at it each morning for what weather was to be. Then he went in & blew the ashen turf & swung the kettle over the new glow & called to the sick woman in the bed.

He was a bearded man, with puckered face above his sailor's jersey: but his age was far outside a small boy's aimless guess & scarce worth question with so many things he had to tell of ships and foreign ports.

He'd sit outside, a dish between his feet - a drop the cleaned potatoes into it - piling the harings on another dish - talking of Singapore and Liverpool & men he'd sailed with. Then he'd cross the road & fling the harings over the sea wall among the tins & splintered lobsterpots for gulls to scatter. Then he would go in to make the dinner & I'd walk away kicking a ball among the drying nets.

I saw the woman once. My mother sent me

to fill a bucket at the gushing pipe & I was coming back not spilling it. I looked in at the seaweed in the porch when suddenly the halfdoor snapped its latch a little figure in a faded shawl bowed on a stick with little skinny legs came shuffling out. I saw her crazy face yellow & dirty, with brown burning eyes like all the witches in my picture books.

I stoppt in fright. She opened her crested mouth & mumbled something that I could not hear & didn't want to.

When I found my strength I dropp't the bucket & ran straight for home.

Next day the sailor would not speak to me.

## Sonnet 35

If terror come and what is worst befall  
 how shall I stand in that Apocalypse  
 a merry jest when my trembling lips  
 or whimpering in the shadow of a wall,  
 or running down the roaring street to call  
 for present mercy from the lashing whips  
 of my sick fear?

The need for comfort slips  
 into stale tropes of rhetoric, and all  
 the stainless armor we have shaken well  
 against the pain prophetic disappears  
 when the Jan horns loom probable  
 crowds round the heart, the 'we' in former years  
 foretold this hour with tireless tedious voice  
 when time still gave or seemed to give a choice

## Stanzas

I  
 In easy days I found my voice with them  
 who prophesied a new Jerusalem  
 nor dream'd the outcome of the years should be  
 a far more terrible Gethsemane.

II  
 We dream of peace & curse our lack  
 that nest us in a slum of wars;  
 yet who dare use our little clock  
 as measure for the marching stars.

## Sonnet 36

I wrote a letter to an alien  
 who was my friend in better days than these  
 and now is exile over the grey seas  
 with others I have known as trusting men;  
 and to my friend the poet whose wise pen  
 has ratified my lyric loyalties;  
 and to a third whose heart found tones of ease  
 in words I made for one not seen again.

I sent the letters out into the night -  
 black night of Britain battling for her life  
 irrelevant and personal as they were  
 like words in bottles bobbing out of sight  
 caught in the winds & leaping waters, strife  
 not knowing but lucky slow they'd fare.

Now that our life grows harder and the sky  
 threatens  
 it is good to remember the <sup>rich</sup> good days

That afternoon I went with my father to Ford's  
 to see the Players play the Gentlemen  
 Dutchiffe the master with the flat black hair  
 and Holmes with peak & jaw against the sun  
 and Woolley at the oval scoring forty  
 in his last season

The thought fast music of the dancers' feet -  
 threading thro' Swanlake or the little Massine  
 sleeping grotesquely in the midnight sun

The smooth tall pop, the belly uddered bronze  
 the little rearing horse cut out of jade  
 the long scroll painting of the hundred geese

The cool hours in the shade at Dipswell Park  
 discussing revolution

and the hours  
 spent drifting past the meadows & great trees  
 at Hatford where the touch of Constable  
 still sparkles on each leaf:

That night the poet came and read his play  
in clear voice, northern resonant & full,  
the white streak down his beard.

These glitters from the matrix of our days  
that even lacking them had certain values  
moments of exaltation & delight  
instants of wit & laughter, quiet hours  
finding an order in appearances  
a working out that order in the mind.

But it is over now: one motive rules  
to being to being till the fingers tire.

Walking in April on the level meadow  
between the hedges gay with croc & thorn  
the sun still bright upon the orchard blossom  
over the river, calling back the dog  
from the uttering the ewes with lambs at foot  
the first rooks leading home to the black trees  
then supper in the low roofed living room  
with shadows sneering over the book and walks  
and mist upon the lawn, the darkening trees  
crowd closer round the house: long threads of cloud  
like foam upon a wevetop beaten back:  
be these remembered for a little while  
like faded snapshots shown in confidence  
to someone chosen from the rowdy room  
because of a name dropped or a gentleness  
pausing a moment in a stranger's eyes  
but hurriedly withdrawn when the harsh voice  
of that coarse sergeant duty intervenes.

21. XII. 1940

When I was small old John my grandfather  
told sometimes of the days when he was young  
the places plaid in a the faces seen  
the fifty nine removal and the famine  
and the hard weather that froze us dough deep.

Once I remember he describes at length  
the solemn friends with their plain yea & nay  
& sober sitting, how they lived for years  
in little cleckens keeping to their way  
altho around them field and people changed,  
the large farms swallowing the cottages and  
roofs falling in and James breaking down  
the bare foot children safe across the sea  
but there remained traditional unaltered  
like little Kingdoms lost among the hills  
on things in foam fringed eddy of a stream.

I could not think then with my grasping mind  
involved in brighter colors than their cloth  
that I myself one day might seem like them  
in the deaf jostle of modernity  
with my slow verses breeding out the year  
not jiggling with the hourly bulletins.

5-I-1941<sup>87</sup>

## Mode

As women change their fancies  
for furs & hats in June  
the students read the poets  
that fashion hits upon  
Now Marvell's private hedges  
have replaced the crops of Donne

and in ten years time the talkers  
will discover Tennyson.

So many songs unsung because the ~~eyes~~  
 thrust crowding questions that annex my thought  
 the still emerge the fragments of a phrase  
 that leaps, a splinter of the mood uncaught.

already frosts attendant miracles  
 snow's muffled wonder on the turning leaf  
 leaving my eyes have prompted the old spells  
 that held the heart above breath's plodding grief

God's world, the world that throngs each tingling sense  
 must be laid by awhile and leave us free  
 till a new age of moaning violence  
 evokes the skill its complications need.

Caught in bad days like frantic fly in glue  
 where each rash gesture makes the fester grip  
 I win no solace from the faint brood time  
 that offered the mind anchor once: I find  
 corollaries beget no fellowship;  
 they still need voice or handclasp who are blind.

Even those hours that broke the brittle glass  
 & let air thro' & fevered hands caress  
 the tapping leaves inevitably pass  
 in the blurred lens to shadows vague & pale  
 the moment's heart up lifting happiness  
 turns rubbed in texture as repeated tale

One such was when we went between the wars  
 before the mad descent had gathered speed  
 & we grew numb beneath the marching stars,  
 to island cliffs against atlantic foam  
 seeking a peace time had denied our need,  
 peace & the heart's inviolable Rome.

There with the sun & wind it seemed attained  
 no insulating layer to next source & sense  
 our cold vexations crumbling there remained  
 the tall unfallen natures moving free  
 breasting against the time's indifference

no gull on wing or full upon the sea

The grunting puffins shuffling on the ledge  
Beside the sag upon her ragged nest  
The whistling tern that charmed the wind's edge  
with Kittiwake that squawked its raucous name  
these somehow offered nurture for our quest  
their qualities of purpose were the same

Yet these are menaced by the cruising gull  
The black-backed rascal with hoarse warning tongue  
whose poise & wing spread still is beautiful  
al tho he take the eiderduck for prey  
or cannibal, devour his sister's young:  
He sheds his life across the brightest day.

### The Threatend Place

Safe in the city hunched behind a book  
with friendly <sup>sounds</sup> light thro walls & from the street  
I suddenly recall the tall grey house  
high on the north shore of the grassy bay  
and the drained hours of terror there alone  
the crowding pines that scratched across the slates  
or poked the windows feeling for the latch  
the swift bats knocking down the swishing leaves  
the hugging darkness when the lamp went out  
the dripping taps the cooling bars & pipes  
that shrank & knocked & shuddered thro the house  
& sweating in the cold bed's twilight cave  
Hearing the hollow stairs remember me  
feet on the road outside come near a house  
steps on the gravel when the moon has set  
the chatter of the runnel over stones  
like someone mocking at my impotence  
a running the wrong way to bring me help  
the wet leaves slapping on the moaning trees  
as sleep cough on the hill behind the shed  
til the whole night's a thumping heart of fear

Safe in the city I remember this  
each accent of my terror shade of dread  
thrusting its image in my quaking mind  
til I grope round the room with jumbling eye



for frame or pot or book to balance by  
or I regain the instance and the hour  
safe in the city hunched behind a book  
shind only when a passing car's cold gears  
cry like the siren I am waiting for.

9. III

### Epitaph for a Lost Generation

Recording only pulse or shape evoked  
exploiting reading or report of friends  
altho the cool mind lifted formal let-  
to blueprint futures we enjoyed our youth

14. III

93

I think perhaps too often of our fate  
astride the buffers pinning gaze upon  
the lines that meet in space but swing apart  
as down the long slope we accelerate  
Towards the disaster always further on  
that has already happened in my heart.

Could I but watch the tedges as we pass  
graze now with bird or life or turn to gaze  
on roof or tree, or cars that move away  
from tangent smoke, or just upon the grass  
or demand at level crossing of the ways  
the painted carts with wind bleached loads of hay

could I but see these with untroubled eyes  
that fear no longer smears into a blur  
of general desolation numbing pain  
would my dull thought grow for an instant wise  
see life as some remote philosopher  
who loves the peasant tho he knows it rain?

## Sonnet 141

I think of Glasgow where reluctantly  
 I had to pause a loiter for a train  
 to carry me from its black smoke a rain  
 to Portobello on the wind whipt sea.  
 Later returning, one companioned me  
 who knew the place in childhood & again  
 was glad to greet it. How these days remain  
 ambered in love for its stark poetry.

Wet street & gantry, chimney, gaslit close  
 the piper in the alley pacing slow  
 My nature torn a friendly kinship shows  
 unlearned feature. When I heard last night  
 that death had set its sober ways alight  
 I saw instead the flames in Sandy Row.

No longer now the sailor & the tramp  
 free in their jostling seeing new suns rise  
 over new places continents away  
 with easy gift for telling fluent lies  
 - the tall gowries drumming in the swamps  
 the luck of Manchester or Mandalay.

Some eager offer in their shuffling steed  
 the blue-eyed airman & the engineer  
 masters of gadgets counting drag & strain  
 making their skill in danger a career  
 success is measured by the graph of deed  
 the nimble knuckle & the blueprint brain

Yet who shall celebrate those quiet folk  
 cautious & truthful, with no skill for steel  
 who open doors to slow & aimless feet  
 and lose the knotted shyness & uncoil  
 the cold fixation in a happy joke  
 that otherwise may end in bombed street?  
 Is there no love down the abandoned street

X  
Take from the mind its little bitterness  
and the vexations which inhabit it  
Release the deep capacity to bless  
the sense of being somehow infinite

The dangers round our days are like the rain  
that falls on good and evil equally  
Only the fool, the privately insane  
wears the assurance of his victory

Time & Bomb

I sometimes find my own optimism  
remarkable.

When the great clock was being wound up  
that ticks out Judgment for cities every night  
when the old crooks were winding it

One for China one for Spain  
the lion of Judah shall never wear his crown again  
one for rubber one for oil  
we may give the Nazis a tenth of our spoil  
another for China a another for Spain  
& a long strong turn for the black Ukrainian  
I said: This has gone too far  
we must have a popular front  
& then the clock will explode on the old men's faces  
& we shall return to telling the time by the sun  
& free men will walk without glancing behind.

Then the clock struck

and the reverberations hung black bellies  
over the misty fjords & the rough Greek islands  
over the flat French fields without ledges  
and little reverberations,  
hardly more than echoes,  
tinkled the glasses in South American bars

24 III 101  
sprinkled a pinch of plaster into the drinks  
- Scotland Road a Stretford St. Mary

and Skopold was Hamlet  
and Judas was Quisling  
and Lebrun hid under the bed  
as Petain beated on his medals  
as Chamberlain reluctantly resigned  
and all the little jins on the continent wept  
as the flat roads were crowded  
and they machineganned the refugees

And I said: There will emerge  
a new Europe after this.

There will there must

Justice a Mercy Justice a Mercy

but other men who have also considered the matter  
would substitute for the word mercy the word love

After the bombing of Glasgow

I still think mercy will be quite enough.

Sap on the sticks again  
a birdsong growing clear  
but the fine drifting rain  
retards the skipping year

as the reluctant spring  
feard what might yet befall  
before the swallow's wing  
shadow the sunset wall.

8. IV. 41

## After the Raid

Along a causeway paved with muddy loam  
huddled with mirrors dismal as the sky  
& well'd by empty windows bared with black  
I trod on glass, until the ember'd fire  
gave mocking comfort to my blood drained face,  
& as I stood to watch the weary men  
direct the leaking jets there suddenly  
woke somewhere in the world the song of birds,  
the dawn crescents of an April day:  
& for a blessed instant I was free  
from the stemmed tear & the frustrated heart.

22. VI. 41

103

## To the Neglected Memory of John Fisher Murray

I was thinking of Ireland  
and those who were fam'd in her story  
victors in Emain Macha  
defeated undaunted in exile  
dead in their youth unfulfill'd  
old among alien jaws  
mend in a penny ballad  
or quoted in annual oration

Then I remembered the others  
not famous for death or disaster  
legends no longer of glory  
made bright by the contrast of shadow  
unremarkable men  
who stood for an instant transfigur'd  
then into history vanish'd  
leaving only a footnote.

## Three Horatian Odes for R. P. M

## I

already autumn silently  
has come to sky & field & tree  
The leaves fall from the limbs  
The oak's at golden prime

Soon my October will be here  
to mark the cresting of my year  
and set me loose to find  
hope in an older mind

The reaper to the gleaming rooks  
has left the fields. The tilted stooks  
shadow the moon bright ground  
where bivouac is found

for you and your jagged company  
who narrow blurs of shadow lie  
until dawn's chilly star  
renews your blueprint war

## II

Since June was hot on head and hand  
and thunder rocket the lush green land  
I've had no skill or time  
to flush my wits with wine

Summer must not forego her praise  
because she brimmed our eager days  
with certain gifts of eye  
not less inherently

But for that crop & harvest of  
symbols & shapes that woke my love  
to ripen I must wait  
nor be importunate

rather because they were so new  
the pulse dare hardly swear them true  
I must allow the mind  
to keep them undefined

and greet this season I have known  
both text and texture of my bone  
with old accustomed phrase  
that served in safer days.

III

You mind the corn not yet asleep  
a certain trust with me may keep  
and not with me alone  
but many another one

who waking when the moon is high  
sees in the bare untroubled sky  
no moaning sign of wars  
only moon blanched stars

and knows that age by broken age  
man here as there has sloughed his rage  
and mind his leaping fears  
to the slow striding years

with stars for gauge with seasons' ebb  
and flow to map the hattered web  
time holds a hooded chance  
keep we but tolerance.

13.9.41 107

Engine Smoke

A wad of smoke broke from the train  
like James unbottled in the brain  
that coil a twist & ravel out  
the knitted logic of a knight  
It hit a hind among the trees  
then lost a circus pony's tress  
and passed into the lower sky  
to end in rain for sun to dry

Another bundle of the stuff  
tumbled & rolled round hemmed & rough  
thro' gaps in hedge then slowly spilled  
over a dark potato field  
knashed down these grey bales were bright  
against the earth's last gasps of light

Their sudden shapes no tenure held  
even in a swiftly crumbling world:  
void as unlettered diagram  
the wind can get no good of them.

## Salute to Horace

I thought of Horace in these raging days  
 the poet with the place in court a hall  
 who was not shamed to give a rich man praise  
 or praise the farmer in his dung <sup>floor's</sup> ~~filled~~ stall  
 who loved his fields his bees his waterfall  
 and had his close knit songs of famous girls  
 of merry evenings with brave witty men  
 and named as alien  
 the glutton's haunch the playboy's scented curls

remembered too his care for natural things  
 the patient shepherd watering his flocks  
 the thistle down that flies the vine that clings  
 on the rough rivulet bounding round the rocks  
 yet spoke without excuse of paradox  
 his fear that faction might disrupt the state  
 that sick patricians should to show their craft  
 force frantic overdraft  
 on the bold virtues that once made Rome great.

I thought him wise & happy tho I know  
 the fate that crasht the pillars in the end  
 since certain scuttled lines are left to show  
 a Roman poet had a noble friend  
 read books lord women was content to spend  
 a Sabine life from action who in youth

had led his legion for a cause held dear  
 but most the moving year  
 with all its changes yielded richest truth.



## On being taught Latin

(a)

I only in my brief latency  
 limpt after Caesar's dream files thro' Gaul  
 and mouthed the tedious words of that old bore  
 about old age; with jifty mot word leads  
 Thumbed dog-eared cribs

Set for a certain term  
 to learn the way to learn my bread without  
 the loosened collar & the calloused palm  
 I sat at mercy of the ignorant  
 dull pitiless men who raspt sarcastically  
 a pocket dry phrases with stale pedantry  
 One not so feeble was too often fooled  
 into a bog of memories of his youth  
 Another who applied against his name  
 long consonantal links of scholarship  
 was the chief monster & grammarian  
 He never taught the vulgar worth of Rome  
 in its squares & efficiency - and style  
 The useful carved letter on the pipes  
 tunnel'd beneath the deeply laid mosaic  
 the viaduct - the arch the stabbing sword  
 This craft was verbal.

Yet not once emerg'd  
 mid the declensions any golden word  
 was by a man to fix a moment's film  
 in amber bendure time's chiding holes.

He curst us as barbarians & strode  
 shuffling his gown, with grave proconsul steps  
 deluding no one.

Yet I do not blame him  
 He arid mist of his labor'd thought  
 thrust him maroon'd upon us & unable  
 to set the Roman life against our life  
 & watch the current leap the little gap.  
 So he was left with child's imperatives  
 a bilious humor & a thinning scalp  
 & we were left with rays of snobbish slant  
 the names upon the honors' board belied.

(b)

So those tall books were chained upon the shelves  
 & all I knew were postcard views of Rome  
 - and certain lays of Byron's rhetoric  
 and several stories my wise Jethro'd told  
 to keep me quiet til he'd swab my knees  
 when I was small & very prone to fall  
 about the geese about the Rubicon  
 but these were mixt with Andersen & Grimm  
 & Liv's cold children shivering in the Moyle.

(c)

Not til I later found good men drew strength  
 from grave ductations til at essay's head  
 old Cowley's (pictured on the title page

a merry Mulla with a cherub's face)  
vast sprawling stanzas of thick twisted prose  
that at sharp corners wore a cuff of gold  
woke me to wonder til I cast about  
rummaged in penny boxes where I found  
John Dryden, Martin, Conington, De Vere  
and saw my Horace thro' a clouded glass  
Dryden the first who used but half his mind  
mere flourishes until he found his aim  
& feathered those red targets of his time:  
Martin who laid his master but conceived  
a Swinburne flux should best express his wit  
Martin the husband of that Irish girl  
who was commended by our Ferguson  
& sits at table shapt by Foley's hand  
at this De Vere, the son of Wordsworth's friend  
the sonneteer; brother of that other  
who wrote of Naevy before her name became  
familiar on the rolls of private schools  
This man Lord Horace too & spent his days  
stretching his narrow talent to include  
the gusts & tempers of a Roman age

(d)

To this I add a moment's memory  
of one my friend who took the volume down  
from the drawers of the books & remarked

'This was a poet that he still admired  
altho' he had to swot him for exams' . . .

I marvelled somewhat at his scholarship  
remembering my lean & rippard skill  
& having come by ways circuitous  
to the same angle I was well content  
having the approbation of his mind  
a stay & buttress I am thankful for.

19. IX.

## Sonnet

Among the many selves that throng my flesh  
that clench the fist or urge the feet to run  
that peer in mirror every morning fresh  
to search my face for whose mask lies thereon  
that jostle on the lips to say unsay  
the words that prompting circumstance demands  
but one recalls the body's built of clay  
and one that clay is shapen well with hands.

and one's a child that whimpers quickly bled  
by joy or sting and quickly reconciled  
and one not yet the master gay & wise  
in patience lets the saying mutinies  
in turbulence & silence troop to bed  
forgives the braggart & enjoys the child

23.9. 115

## The Lagan in September

There was no wind & ripples only broke  
where two drab swans were groping after weeds  
small ripples soon subsiding. Even the smoke  
from misty chimney kept straight shape in air  
and no leaf moved or fell

The heavy burdened trees had lost their gleam  
but only showed stray edges of their age  
their dark reflections passing thro' the stream  
grew downwards stiffly into endless space  
but won no motion there.

In the dry rustles of a narrow creek  
a moor hen perked its head & drove for home  
its white tail feathers & its yellow beak  
distracting eye adjusted to the shades  
of the autumnal dusk.

The Lifting<sup>2</sup>

They gathered from half a country side  
to wake the decent fellow who'd died  
the bearded man who had lived alone  
with neither chick nor child of his own  
They came by lorry they came by train  
from over the hill & down the lane  
they came by twos & they came by threes  
from most of a dozen parishes

They sat a smoker & talked of his worth  
no decent fellow had traveled the earth  
they smoked & ate & the grub was good  
and the liquor was better than the food  
& hard it was to go into the night  
when the fire was high & the lamp was bright  
so when morning came some lay on the floor  
and some on the midden beyond the door  
til by twelve o'clock a gone time to lift  
there wasn't a dozen with strength to shift  
but the five bold men with the clearest wits  
hoisted the coffin by starts & jibs <sup>stabs</sup>  
& carried it down to the <sup>long way</sup> ~~Booth~~ Gap  
where the minister waited stiff in his trap

They took their turns & they carried it high  
but the way was long & the work was dry

for the burying ground was the most of a mile  
on the other side of the <sup>in claret</sup> ~~Mitchell~~ stile  
so one suggested they'd ease the load  
with a quick cool drop on the country road

When they reached the house they left their friend  
in his coffin propped at the gable end  
& they went inside & called a round  
for the sake of the man going underground  
& the weight of him & the length of the way  
& the time of the year & the hour of the day  
& a round by round <sup>step by step</sup> ~~determined~~ a grin  
they knocked them down for the sake of him  
there were fewer & fewer <sup>to think of him</sup>

<sup>So</sup> Then one by one the party diminished  
til two were left when the last round finished  
had there been three the minister might  
have made a fourth for the pot alright  
but the clergyman was a <sup>not much</sup> ~~curious~~ chap  
- the coffin was there but not the trap  
for the time was already a quarter to eight  
& he would not bury a man that late

So they went in again in honor bound  
to wait til the other crayters came round  
& what with words & what with blows

a a name misplact a a bloody nose  
it soon was time for the house to close.  
So one by one they were laid along  
the side of the stumph in a sodden throng

At half past ten they began to stir  
a call for the bloody minister  
a sober up a despair a doubt  
a decide to go home or to finish it out.

By eleven o'clock they lifted again  
a shuffled farther along the lane  
but the gate was chained a the sexton's door  
was <sup>the most of</sup> half a mile away or more

So they climbed the wall a with <sup>pruning</sup> care  
carried the coffin fair a square  
a stumbling blindly mound by mound  
came to the gaping hole in the ground  
a laid their load in the open clay  
a tipped the cloths in a shambled away

But the lonely moon shining over the wall  
gave never a hint that she saw at all  
that someone <sup>body</sup> was buried without a word  
save the fearsome heart of a fightend bird.

Brook 1944

"The best" 7.42  
15 Poems  
New Poems 2.X.47  
4/12/94  
Feb 21 1947  
self-st. telegraph 119

## The Little Lough

There in a bare place in among the rocks  
grey rounded boulders shouldered from the ground  
where no field's big enough to yield three stacks  
and corn grows on a fistful of black land  
is a small narrow lake narrow a brown  
with whistling rushes elbowed here a there  
and in the middle is a grassy stone  
that heron or someone other wanders  
will rest it in darkly.

Sometimes there will rise  
a squawking mallard with a startling spray  
heading far inland that the swift eyes lose  
in the low mist that closes round the day

Tho many things I love should disappear  
in the black night ahead of us I know  
I shall remember silent crouching there  
your pale face gazing where the rushes grow  
seeking between the tall rods for the last  
black chick the grebe is cruising round to find  
my pointing finger shewing it not lost  
but sheltered only from the ruffling wind.

memory of Donegal  
(Barton lot)

## Dedication

I have a certain skill in phrase  
 can trace a space the slide of mood  
 and from the tumult of my days  
 begot my own beatitude

For tho' the years have stupefied my mind  
 of painted shrine a murmured creed  
 the gay unfettered senses find  
 the ritual that all men need

not in the hallowed bread & wine  
 the blessed relic or the bell  
 but in the shaping of a line  
 that mystery makes a miracle.

## Sonnet:

When whale braind yellow lifted up his arms  
 against the grey disk in the curving light  
 the lean & angry prophet smote his palms  
 & bade the rockhorse thunderbolt attend  
 to wipe the mercy slate for his sick friend  
 Ranging as stiff as fingered belemnite

Pod soft & hairy as a seeded weed  
 the blessing drew against him rubbed his sides  
 masked in blood congealed & stiffly glued  
 in the red tears that scalloped the blue lids.

But the admonishing of rain & wind  
 on the bare skull smeared bear & blood away  
 what once was godded was not even named  
 a nested socket now, a robin's eye.

## Fragment for "Apocalypse"

It started unobtrusively one year  
with a common garden herb that lost its scent  
the fact remarked by many but unrecorded  
it was so trifling. After twenty years  
the loss was noted in the newspapers.

Then came an epoch when sharp violence  
became the normal pattern of behavior  
murder of princes murder of famous men  
black in the headlines or in narrow type  
a drooping coroner's sticky platitudes  
on a man who killed a child with a metal box  
or only wore the ring of a rubber stamp  
smudged in his wallet. I was only twelve  
when a tall man tried to sell his gun to me

Then wars in the picture papers rapidly scanned  
waiting my turn at the barber's men with caps  
bound round their thick legs trudging thro' the snow  
or strikes or baton charges. Even ships  
uppt open by green icebergs. Then the drums  
pounding the latent nerves twisting the bruised heart  
til men broke into leady hystericks of noise  
convulsive jerking in thought or paralysis  
with certain crises of peace when the pulses flagged.

But nevertheless in those days many still  
made love wrote verses painted colored panels  
grew roses walked by rivers drank with friends  
or cheered from draughty stands their last free choice

Some led good lives then with or without regard  
for the sharp tradition of a murdered god  
or a moaning peasant woman, binding the knots  
of father children, legislating for justice  
tabling amendments to the avalanche

But few had felt the heat go out of them  
even out of the best who'd whittled life  
to a clean bone of behavior sapping tense  
or so they kept to breathe in immortal spring.

They were all nestes or shadows but did not know  
not having a gnaw of life as it was lived  
before the air grew rank & cancerous

## Sonnet: Winter Plowing

Compelled to silence by the urgent time  
 that eats my hours up in a vain essay  
 to draw use from me in another way  
 than I had reckoned for my easy prime  
 I let the friendly plowshare of my time  
 rust idly in the corner. Day by day  
 I planned escape to labor but it lay  
 unharnessed & unready. Now oak & lime  
 have shed the last leaves on the sodden earth  
 & later morning wakens to the frost  
 I snatch an instant for my proper skill  
 to split the clods & tease the soil until  
 the season's temper hastens on the birth  
 of what so long I dreaded had been lost.

## On reading Auden &amp; others.

These men have spoken for my generation  
 have offered phrases for the wary disquiet  
 that yawns beside young elbows - at the bar  
 or grips the heart constricted walking home

They have given a form of counters for exchange  
 among acquaintances who meet to talk:  
 for nervous imitation blanketing  
 the individual pain in general grief.

These men have spoken for a generation  
 but not for me. My conflicts are not new  
 they fettered men in jaded photographs  
 or stiff in steel engravings waving swords.

And I have sought to find a common speech  
 not vowel'd into mode but sonorous  
 as phable enough to give response  
 to what I share in common with my kind.

For what's in fashion will be out of fashion  
 before the year unouseless is rewound  
 as I have mistak too much to be content  
 like some slow mollusc with its annual shell.



## "The Tailors' at the Post"

There of a night (and even after mass  
on Sunday afternoons) the men will gather  
strong labourers & fishermen with skill  
to thread the wide flung jeltin bed of rocks  
maybe a driver stopping overnight  
to take the early bus back to Sweedore  
and every fortnight a bank Indian  
with well mtd case strapped to a bicycle  
to take a hand at cards.

They sit around  
the great white table underneath the lamp  
and deal with nimble fingers.

Always too  
the widow joins them. She is mad for cards  
& has been known to play til screech o' day.

The calls are rapid & the play is swift  
They flip the full hands down & name their luck  
& shuffle quickly, never saying much  
save in the way of bidding or reproach  
& reckoning the little silver piles.

## Sonnet: Christmas Rhymers

The Christmas Rhymers came this year open  
mere boys they were & hammered on the door  
with "Woe's the Rhymers!". Open up before  
wee Divil Doubt has counted up to ten  
or we'll do mischief" So I barged them then  
from upstairs windows, tho my heart was sore  
for those that ranted on the kitchen floor  
& are not here now, being fighting men.

And as they tiptoed back along the lane  
a shagging & crestfallen regiment  
without a word - St. George & Humphrey Jack  
The Doctor & Lord Cromwell & their train  
I knew that more than Christmas Rhymers went  
into the shadows never to come back.

Jane Mullan said  
something like this.

J.M. died earlier 1943  
aged 80

27. XII

## The Long Field

I saw the long field plowed. I saw the dark  
potato leaves close jostled in the rain  
I chased the sheep that blundered in one day  
a watch the battered earth between the rips  
and their retreat in dust.

And now again  
I stand to watch the long field as the light  
dies quickly from the east: a that black earth  
is littered with the dead & shriveled stalks  
& wonder what will take the restless skies?  
benevolence or dole when next I come  
or if they're just the gaps the sheep came thro'.

Dough

27. XII 129

## Winter Dawn

In the half light of morning on the hill  
that fronts the sun not risen yet to sight,  
a clump of elms enpraved against the sky  
flings up a seethe of rooks that flap a cry  
at random: save for this the earth is still  
as tho' all else were eager for the light.

Bayer Co. Don

28.XI.41

### An Ulsterman

We live in a poor country where the people  
 rasp spade on rock or plow in the deep clay.  
 If low, the fields are flooded every year;  
 if high, the moss & heather stink the sheep.

A man may grind a grasp & only find  
 a score of acres on the lawyer's map  
 to point to on the wall when he is near  
 his best admonishing of his tall sons  
 & one has sent a pencil note for crêpe.

There is no thickness in the dung stained tenap  
 his days have wefted. His best qualities  
 are bare & lonely & bereft of wonder  
 are hard bare gestures & slow whittled words:  
 his simple thoughts are regularly herded  
 between the tall pews of the small stone church  
 where a hoarse organ marshals the cold virginals

10.8.48

And in the end - for who has never paused  
 at the rough wallstead deep in ruin and decay?  
 There'll be but tumbled stones to tell who passed,  
 and no more said again beside a rock.

13A  
29.XI.41

### Out of this Year

Out of this murderous year that flounders its course  
 thro' the sick nights of waiting, thro' the days  
 marked by the numb anxiety, the harsh  
 unreal light upon the shattered sheets  
 the side line impotence as torn by torn  
 the soviet sixth shrank back upon its core  
 as I stood useless or as useless still  
 when in the raw months slowly hope began  
 to press open across the broken earth  
 to triumph that I had no right to share  
 nor could have bettered by surrendering  
 my name & habit to the nameless swarm  
 who carry their nostalgia with noise,  
 out of this year & almost out of life  
 let me hoard up the transitory things  
 that lie the closest to my trick of breath:  
 that afternoon beside the full dark stream  
 flicking my grass blades in its furks & clefts  
 the high sky blue & all the trees in leaf  
 the sun hot on the heavy uncut hay  
 Keats' book beside me, & your marriage  
 cruising with mine beside the blades of grass.

memory of Doagh

## Tercia Prima: Of the Making of Books

I've read too much of what the poets wrote  
 the trivial lyric and the shoddy tale  
 the slipshod couplet rattling in the throat  
 till my response is passionless & stale  
 and as the grey type slithers past my eyes  
 the shapes evoked are fugitive and frail  
 without the glitter of the mind's surprise  
 blurred as the labeled forms of days routine  
 that ask and need no lens clear scrutinies  
 to flush the pulse with what their features mean  
 and set the hushed heart croaking with delight  
 as at the first frost or the herb's first green  
 or life in water held against the light.

And in this numb mood then my timid thought  
 checks at its pauper state and rocks with fright  
 that length of days should be so dearly bought  
 by heart's attention and the gladdened sense  
 which makes a poison of the stuffs it sought  
 and mocks me with a dolt's innocence.

Walking in winter how the eyes will stretch  
 their hydra hands & grope for the black bud  
 about to open, keeping ardent watch  
 for green nail tip or heaving hint of seed.

So bearded exiles cheer the gaps in ice  
 and see the blue wake open to their home  
 yet half regret the new familiar place  
 that in a month will only be a name.

On the Choice of Titles  
a note for Estyn Evans

An earnest scholar skilled to weigh  
from evidence of shard and bone  
why creatures of a cruder day  
left labor'd rituals in stone  
took note of nimble peasant hands  
and what they wrought at page by page  
til bound in bulk the record stands  
and letter'd Irish Heritage

Tho what he wrote was rescued well  
from progress and its deaf machine  
that never tolls the craftsman's knell  
to me that title still must mean  
the coiling tangle of desire  
that thrests across this windy stage  
with breaking hearts or wits on fire  
that is the Irish Heritage

The coarse buffoon with bawdy laugh  
who molds the mob with crafty hand  
the randy squint whose epitaph  
is scrawled across a begger's land  
the poet's talk the tenor song  
the cattle dealer's storm of rage  
when sober daylight proves him wrong -

this is the Irish Heritage.

The martyr stubborn for his cause  
the rebel's final eloquence  
the wester wheeling your applause  
and after pocketing your pence  
the man who faces death or bulls  
with only threadbare words for wage  
the dreamer walking in the hills -  
this is the Irish Heritage.

The Bell: July 1942

16. I. 42

## Pleaser

I remember walking thro the august twilight  
along the narrow lane from house to house  
the boys here playing hurley loud & shouting,  
and two black calves there making mournful cry

It seemed the long way round that we were taking  
over a rough ground higher than the bog  
three fields away while foam was on the breakers  
gales opposition made us both dog tired.

Then darkness came & window after window  
held out its yellow candle. We went on  
by gulls that cried above the water's din  
slow pacing now & faintly admonished.

We reached the three small houses & the gate  
that faced them where the drive turned to the left.  
It was too late to make a call we argued  
there was no blink of light in any room.

But halfway down the drive we saw the water  
still working in the garden with his wife  
I started - he straightened up to answer  
and in the gloom his fine head glimmered white.

21. I. 42 137

## British troops in N.I.

O pity these  
the unattached & the supremely bored  
wandering at letter nameless as the keine  
who lost their names when they were driven in  
from the small pastures where their names are known.

O pity these angry and ill at ease  
in a strange country that their fathers wronged  
and petulantly waiting something great  
that shall release them into ecstasy  
the peak of victory or jambien gate.

When the text was had crumpled on the board  
 and my good uncle's death had found its place  
 with all the square large tablets and stone men  
 I found my father who those years had been  
 a quiet shadow not to be disturbed  
 a quiet still but kindly hearted man.

I found my mentor with him in a mind  
 that set by mine had wip'd my clutter'd thought  
 uncoil by warm attraction and begin  
 to seek a stem and stature of its own

Trotting to school beside him I began  
 to mold the hearsay stories by the hearth  
 of stars and shepherds and the golden tales  
 of tall gods out of Greece with sterner knowledge  
 of suffering men with wisdom in their mouths  
 into a Jain philosophy for a boy  
 He did not clean the round or plot the chart  
 save by suggestions I was free to choose  
 as shrewd examples out of many faiths  
 of low men met the bat wings doubts that beat  
 about the hedge tops of all lonely roads.

Then level in his mind and head secure  
 his cool demeanor gave me goal and mark

to seek and start from. After many years  
 it sometimes seems as if I had come home  
 to charity and breathless confidence  
 that needs no aphorism for its sheer proof

I remember now

The sunlight flashing from the rounded flints  
 along Niarbyl strand, the bishop's grave  
 the smell of damp within the walls, the sun  
 dropping a pallid disk into the sea  
 on our own lush hills, for he was there  
 with me a grounding every element  
 of prompted fancy that my lively mind  
 grappled a swamp on.

Why should I recall  
 the floating swans the wig rotted arch  
 the stair spind belfry and the strange pecked caps  
 the dogs between the wheels the famous caves  
 whence once like Dante we were born to light.  
 and all the thumbs and catclaps away  
 of jigsaw pieces Flanders came to mean  
 since all is boarded here and hois open  
 like wist hair ghotenir when I lift my head  
 and he is here to share the loaded sight?

3.2.42

## Sonnet

I thought tonight of all the lovers gone  
 the tall the broad the swift of foot the fair  
 who strode the woods or waking in the dawn  
 by some fern feathered pool shook dewbright hair  
 and how a bloody end was sure for each  
 because their love was far too weak to win  
 more than a mumbling poet's after speech  
 seeking a subject for his discipline

Once amongst in youth I set your name  
 with names that leap too easily from the tongue  
 Forget the boast: it was a foolish game  
 forgiven only when the heart is young  
 Rather to pray our love last all our days  
 than be remembered in a poet's phrase

3.2.42

141

## Sonnet - The Shuffling Target

The attitudes my fancy, limited  
 by this jaded epoch, wishes to assume  
 one of the aging poet's shaggy head  
 the fine words spoken in a friendly room  
 the good men laughing with the laborer  
 over the gate in some green country place  
 the school boy stopping with a breathless stone  
 remembering a stamp and a face.

But these are not the features I had planned  
 when all the chartered ways of men were plain  
 rather the solemn tribune's lifted hand  
 the voice that shook the senate not in vain  
 or gravely bowing to the world's applause  
 a people all incarnate in a cause.



8-2-42

## Sonnet

This doctor's son this thief whose shocking lies  
won him a laughing pint from bar to bar  
has a warm face & sympathetic eyes  
that mock his ill made parody of war

He steals your books he offers bouncing cheques  
with such affronted air & wounded pride  
you'd scarcely dare to thwart him or to vex  
so frail a spirit or so crucified.

His talk rewards you well for half an hour  
with its vast stride of epic rhetoric  
The praise stence the Mayakovsky power  
are something felt & so mere slysters' tricks  
til you recall with sickening regret  
he and Van Gogh and Christ are in your debt.

17-3-42 <sup>43</sup>

## Sonnet

Now on the brink and threshold of my prime  
altho the sick world lurches out of gear  
and every moment holds its making fear  
I dare to praise the fulness of my time  
there still were roads to follow hills to climb  
and undants when the work of breath was clear  
my disciplines were apt as now are dear  
and chief of these the friendly craft of mine.

The days have had their insolence and wrong  
as I have said my say and shall open  
when time requires it, which will not be long  
or I mistake the qualities that men  
have yet to struggle for safety <sup>until</sup> then  
I'll shape a narrative my untroubled song.

17.3.42

Sonnet

I have loved life not only as it sped  
along the roads that brought me sought-for gain  
the trees in leaf or bare, the pelting rain  
the sudden clouds about the watershed  
the tossing loosestrife & the sunbright spread  
of balance's wing, the lost & tasselled grain  
of the berry heavy hedges in the lane  
the tilted hat that skirmished round my head.

Not these alone, but voices of my kind  
caught at a corner, rather overheard  
then gaped for or demanded, for my mind  
like a steep field from stacks labor freed  
accepts the thistle down the random seed  
borne by the wind, beast's flanks or beak of bird.

Walter Vercin

21.3.42

147

Summer 1943

The lyric sensuously rimed  
with chiming echoes out of books  
was never yet by man designed  
to match the weather of her looks

The sonnet moving to its close  
with golden octave pause and clench  
was never woven yet to hold  
the laughing eyes the lifted chin

And the I've spent ten years or more  
on stanza's shape & ways of words  
I'd squander all the skill I've stored  
to grant you half a glimpse of her.

21.3.42

# Passion

The tall man spilled his cards  
and stood up with a cry  
as hard words started harder  
and insults kept on lies

I scored in sudden flash  
my caution learnt at school  
and curd the fate makes passion  
the privilege of fools.

Book ✓

Lagen 1945  
Little Reviews Anthology 1946  
New York Press 1945

19/22-3.42

147

# Once Alien Here

Revised  
April 1945

Once alien here my fathers built their house  
claimed drains & gave the land the shapes of use  
and for their urgent labor spared no more  
than shuffled pennies from the <sup>hoarded</sup> store  
of well rubbed words that had left their over tones  
in the ripe England of the mounded downs.

sullen  
The native Irish leaping to the hills  
took with them the enchantments & the spells  
that in the char's free days hung gay & rich  
over every twig of every thorny hedge  
and gave the rampocket stone a meaning past  
the blind engraving of the jibran's foot.

So I, because of all the burned men  
in water clay, because of rock & glen  
and mist and rain and quality of air  
as <sup>native</sup> ~~boon~~ in my thought as any here  
who new word ~~make a name to fit that thought~~  
our stubborn wisdom individual <sup>scale</sup>  
~~in father speech stand monitoring all my doubt,~~  
and ~~lost~~ <sup>yet lacking</sup> so skill in either mode of song  
the graver English or by the Irish tongue.  
must let this rich earth so enhance the blood  
with a steady pulse where no is plunging mood  
till thought a single may, identified,  
find easy voice to utter each aright!

## Winter in Armagh

The army lorry cold anonymous  
straining its plates and groaning heavily  
bore me at speed along the winter road  
between black ledges under a grey sky

Low on the left a flooded bog was fenit  
with black tipped flags that here & there had gone  
all over ripe and lained by the wind  
into gay flaunting tufts of thistledown

and on the right the higher ground assumed  
the attributes of hills: the cresting trees  
bare now & grey with the approaching mist  
with starlings black in rowdy companies

Then at a sudden corner ledges gave  
a grass bank topped by line of oak or beech  
above red arcs of wet decaying leaves  
& wind with wing high as man could reach

I glanced at the young soldier by my side  
gripping the wheel with greasy knuckled hand  
a cockney by his tongue, & wondered if  
I spoke my thoughts his gaze or understand

for I am native its my fathers came

from father acres over the grey sea:  
the clay that hugs those rows of exile bones  
has shaped my phantom nationality.

25.3.42

## Exercise

This mannered verse will only serve  
as handy slings for pebbled curse  
but for the richer moods I need  
the looser tunes that freedom sings.

## Sick Sebastian

This was a man I dreaded his sharp mind  
set such an edge upon his witty tongue  
He knew so many arts and had defied  
their shifting fabrics in his clever song.

I thought that being humble wearing plain  
the homespun vesture of provincial wit  
I'd be the target for a shrewd campaign  
and he should grow and I should shrink from it.

But when I saw him in his conscript garb  
his mind gone ravel'd now with shambling feet  
I pitied him in whom each ragged barb  
was rusting in a pus of sick conceit.

Rayner Heppenslett was a L/C R.A.  
during the war, stationed at Ballycarry

## The Little Glen

Step off the road and in a hollow place  
too rough for lovers seldom next by children  
until the clustered blackberries are ripe  
the blackthorn blossom and the gandy whin  
offer a dappled interval of peace.

A slow stream curbed at every little fall  
by drifted leaves and shrinking down the stones  
that tilt, clay caked, for lack of recent rain  
maps out the ragged path you still may take  
between the tall and wiry smothered trees  
The broad grass swatches are rich with violet  
long stemmed by struggle to achieve the sun  
and glossy Kingcup larval of its gold  
and, banked along the straggling Hawthorn hedge  
the gay wood sorrel with its blunted leaf  
and the neat stitchwort with its taper blades  
The noisy birds pass over and you may  
pace undiverted thro' the netted light  
as silent as a thrush with work to do.

5.7.  
7.5.42

## In sufficient Awe

We pace the throng'd substantial years  
with insufficient awe  
stitch to so slim a segment  
of universal law:

The edges and the shapes  
The hues and stains and skies  
That brick and trim our world  
can only show the quality  
our shepherd with applause

not guessing how precarious  
the gesture and the <sup>the threads</sup> phrase that lies between  
between a hero's bitten lips  
and a cretin's dribbled jaws *silly grin,*

The lines and temperatures within  
The bond upon the storm  
The image in the passing eye  
The lava and the stone.

Poetry Scotland 1944 Book 8.9.42 153

## September Lull

This house well fenced with alder sycamore  
and beech that was a flickering copse of song  
from the grey hour before the weekend day  
was brimmed with wing beat on the work of birds  
until the last <sup>note</sup> ~~there~~ <sup>left</sup> ~~sh sang~~ the sun to rest  
knows only now the strong winds blustering  
and the intermittent batteries of rain.

This is the ebb of birdsong. You may see  
a startled robin scuffle in the hedge  
and hear no more than curlews passing over  
the bare wet hill between you and the light.

The Bell, January 1943

8-9-42

Autumn 1941

## Seeding Time

This is the season of the thistledown  
tilted on whin or not yet broken loose,  
waiting the destined wind that latched behind  
the cold hills of the west is hurrying  
to its appointed moment. From the beech  
the green husk fathers; from the sycamore  
the scimitars spin down. Earth earns again  
what was so lavishly spent in flower and leaf  
And I, a barren summer in my hand  
walking in dread of frost's grey penny  
already find my hands too small to cup  
the cloud of clustered berries in my grasp

8-9

157

## Spoiled Summer

As the grain needs I need for ripening  
sunshine and heat and mercy from the wind  
Here in the fields the proven tablet's market  
with storm and flood and cold cloud-cumbered days:  
the green oats tumble in the slanting rain  
or the wet stalks slip down the unweeded hill  
and lie in lakes of stubble. Blackened stacks  
not worth the shifting rot in swamps of grass  
Yet on the hills the roaring tractor turns  
new leaves for second chances. There will be  
another spring another round of growths  
to heal the raw heart of a wasted year.

But not for me. The summer of my days  
scarred by disaster, bruised by violence,  
the stripping hopes my eager spring put forth  
caught by the working wheels, will never wear  
the patient light of autumn on their crests,  
I can but hope thro' wise economy  
to reach a fateful age til asked to die

## The Brothers

We saw him first stretching for blackberries  
a tall and shambling lad with english tongue  
and knee high by his side a tiny boy  
too headed, munching what his brother plucked

Then after urgent in the driving rain  
downhill towards the village once again;  
we passed them coming up, the little child  
well wrapped against the weather in his car  
the tall lad pushing silent his wet hair  
flat on his brow. He answered our salute  
and thrust on aimless snapping over twigs  
the ceaseless gale had flung upon the road  
with muddy leaves revert a Jackson flowers.

At noon, at dusk we see the moving pair  
growing weather and the time of day  
resting no more than birds rest, by a bush  
or for a moment by the six barred gates  
these farmers guard their fields with

When the day  
seems all propitious we shall stop to talk  
and they shall answer in their separate ways  
why they are bound so to these hilly roads  
and what their world is like, and who may be  
the other strange inhabitants besides

the heavy heron with the floppy wings  
the black rooks homing to the smoky trees  
and the small robin on the white wattle post.

Took

## The Alder Stick

8-9.42

Cutting an alder branch to shape a stick  
I peeled the thick bark off green strips by strips  
like bitten apple the white wood turned red  
rust red of beechleaf not of berry or lip.

and as I wrought it pausing now and then  
to balance on my fingers or its swing  
feeling its strength along my arm I thought  
men fools to name this wood a useless thing

good only for the props and piles whereon  
to heap their brittle walls of stone and brick  
Its red blood stains my hands. The mark remains.  
I have gained something more than plodding sticks



"The Bell" June 1943

"Irish Poems of Today 1944" 8.9

Book

## The Glens

new Irish Poets 1948  
with  
The Anthology 1947

Ground by deep glens and walled along the west  
by the bare hill tops and the tufted moors  
this rim of arable that ends in foam  
has doubt to drop a leaf or snap a branch  
and my hand twitches with the leaping verse  
as hazel twig will wrench the straining wrists  
for untapped yet that thrusts beneath the sod.

Not these my people, of a rarer faith  
and a more violent lineage. My dead  
lie in the steeped hillock of Kilmore  
in a fat country rich with bloom as fruit  
my days, the busy days I owe the world  
are bound to find unerring roads and rooms  
heavy with talk of art and politics  
I cannot spare more than a common phrase  
of crop or weather when I pace these lanes  
and pause at ledge gaps spying on their skill  
so many fences stretch between our minds.

I fear their creed as we have always feared  
the lighted hand between the mind and truth  
the Blessed Virgin and the Ace of Spades

I know their savage history of wrong  
and would at moments lend an eager voice

if voice avail, to set that tally straight.

And yet no other corner in this land  
offers in shape and color all I need  
for sight to touch the mind with living light.

10.9.

### While reading Landon's Hellenics

Prone on the pale sand in September sun  
I looked up from the books of Landon's verse  
as twenty soldiers ran to meet the waves  
shouting and leaping for an hour released  
from wrench and axle and the oily rag.

And it seemed somewhere by a sea as blue  
between green headlands that the shouting Greeks  
wrestled and splashed before they bound their swords  
against their thighs and shouldering their packs  
marched back to fame anonymous and death.

I watcht in envy of the easy limbs  
that paced the flying sand and cursed my luck  
I have no skill to call before the eyes  
of men unborn the gestures and the forms  
of those who fought for taller towers than Troy.

12.9.

163

### Found Money

Men you would call just middling farmers here  
not big fellows have got a run of sheep  
there on the back hills hardy mountain sheep  
that's worth two hundred pounds a year at least  
and all found money.

They need little care  
except at lambing time - and once or twice  
- a day for dipping. You can leave them there  
and know they're coining for you all the time

The folks spend easy here. For every house  
has got a son at sea or in the states  
sending good money home.

They're not so tight  
as those that have to take it from the ground.

Since 1948 I have learned that sheep  
cost more trouble than this

Mick Hamblin, putcher, e'dell was  
the source of above. He does not keep sheep

with emendations & extension in "Freehold" 1946

## Feather on Turf.

We walkt these roads remarking this or that  
the variations on the six barred gate  
effects of light on Garrison, on the sea  
and how the westwind shapes the lonely tree  
naming the wild flowers watching from the rocks  
the diving cormorants, the busy flocks  
of little stint land where the bog brown Gall  
cuts <sup>the</sup> seashore with a lazy scrawl  
and leaves a rounded tongue of sand where on  
the patriarchal heron stands alone.

We learned from critics how that field of grain  
was reaped too soon. Far better risk the rain  
than build it up before its dry. And how  
the lads these days will never learn to row  
like these fine crews that kept for twenty years  
their elegant unbeatable careers

And now returning to the city's grey  
autumnal gloom, the whetted crowds by day  
the earlier evening with the curtailed light  
and smothered dread of sirens in the night  
we know that from this gentle interval  
rich moments will return when words recall  
spoken or read, or when the mind is caught  
adrift and idle from the leash of thought.

I even hope that certain images:  
stark country-phrases shadows made by trees  
cloud colors shapes of shell or stranded weed  
feathers on turf or withered husks of seed  
and all the figures that my meshy brain  
may in its knots and unravelled loops retain  
will when the hand is ready prompt again  
the quiet verses that have strength to give  
some lasting reason why I like to live.

But what I do not know what ever doubt  
is that when beating showers have flattened out  
our footsteps from the mud & when the land  
wears no more hint of us than tidewash sand  
one shred will linger tint or tone or touch  
about the places we have loved so much  
and if a farmer pausing at his plow  
or fisherman with one more line to throw  
will but recall a word of all I said  
or how you walkt and how you held your head.

28.12

## For One who has not fought

let bugle thin my scalp with marching ghosts  
and fingers clench for organ at the Rest  
alike I claim no place with amber troths  
where men forget the waddy's empty sleeve.

for I shall walk more soberly than these  
having my own nostalgias to weep  
a maimed world rocks them on her ruined knees.  
I have been disoriented by time.

28.12

167

## The Photograph

If I should show this snapshot to my album  
there'd be a rush of leaves to justify  
the altered faces that are pasted there  
the Lord sun's smile will turn to paper mask  
the hat become a date  
but there'll be breath enough to whisper still  
Remarks the thinning hair the sagging mouth  
We had our promise hoarded it for years  
now this slack wastrel proves our flat defeat,  
and verifies the anxious glance we wear  
here on the fringes of the family group.  
But comfort. He will fade as we have faded  
become a guy a shadow and a smudge  
while you the oldest one who writes first  
will cling to your emulsion's skin and keep  
a curl rug'd smile of sentiment to stop  
the cynic's fingers idling after tea

Book Bell Feb 1948

29.12

## The Happy Man

The happy leave no clues. The frightened man  
peers backward to the taws behind the door.  
The broken flowerpot the embegged charge  
The cynic wears that laminated boot  
he limps with in the alleys of his mind  
The rebel always carries on his back  
The roaring master or the prim lippt aunt.  
The sprawling signature curves back in time.

But when the happy man has left the room  
we only can recall the instants' spur  
that woke his laughter or provoked his smile  
We cannot prove how he was taught to laugh.

29.12

169

## The Wind Swings East

After a christmas wet as autumn mould  
and mild as late september, suddenly  
the south wind swings to east the light grows cold  
and snowflakes tuckell out of the grey sky

Our hearts that had so quickend to the frost  
white on the lawn  
and then sagged back at moonlit on the roof  
and then sagged back their dream of winter lost  
when the noon sun had put his power to proof

already eager scan the rimming hills  
where snow first camps before he marches in  
on his absurd invasion till he fills  
the dripping gutters and absorbs the din

The shod wheels make upon the gritty road  
for we have need to see the east at peace  
beneath the noiseless weight of winter's load  
to board our strength before spring's rest release.

## East Antrim Winters

Wet roads between black ledges, and a sky  
 faint yellow green with sunset, ribbed by hees  
 all shuppt to twigs. Unrimented loose  
 rooks flap for home with slow and easy beat  
 from the dark furrows that this morning's plow  
 uppt over the bleached stubble. At the bridge  
 the glatted ripples crowd beneath the arch  
 each spind with light like twinkling stickleback  
 or idly turn aside a coast the stones  
 that held the withered hicken since the floods  
 of angust drapt each rope with wisps of straw  
 white in the distance in the day light  
 move fish and faces, metal to the light  
 the cycle's wheel rims and a swirp can  
 Only a lonely blackbird cries aloud  
 near hand but out of sight.

Sun's tide recedes  
 then darkens - as a cap of cloud descends;  
 but no lamp wakens in the scattered farms.  
 The moon will rise on a deflected world.

## Year's End

Our climate's fashion now will let the year  
 ebb out in rain and darkness with a raw  
 and squally wind before the snows begin  
 to make their light - and meagre armed essays  
 croching a tree and trying on a stone  
 or bringing out the brickwork of a wall  
 until the dropsied thaw eliminates  
 the white tongue on the laurel and the rib  
 of speckled crystal on the pillar box

The days still lengthen and the evenings  
 are set in steely light. Another month  
 and then the confident and friendly snow  
 will supersede the rattling gusts of hail  
 and raise another town for us to spoil.

30.12

## During a Rest

When I am busy at my trade  
all things conspire to keep me so  
if I take time to be afraid  
it's that I won't have time to show  
the contribution Semet made  
the debts that Coubit seems to owe

But now when I can rest awhile  
can gaze and yawn and turn about  
and risk the leisure of a smile  
or spare a momentary doubt  
and think no more of school or style  
of Ponsin's calm and Bruchtel's rout

The well stemmed universe rolls in  
with crested wave on ear and eye  
the gale achieves niagra din  
the clouds are boiling in the sky  
and on each inch of naked skin  
sensation stings relentlessly.

30.12.42

173

Drop down drop down the ropes that bind  
my thrashing thoughts on Logic's bed  
and for a moment let me find  
the crazy countries of my mind  
before I'm disinherited.

For the by rule elastic deft  
the course of nations or of stars  
may be predicted right or left  
there still may bloom in pebbled cleft  
some balsam for the older wars

That rage behind the fingertips  
and storm with slanting thro' the brain  
beard in frock upon the lips  
or painted eyes on prows of ships  
or lovely knights atilt in Spain.

Waste Voices  
Summer 1943

28.1.43

From a Train by the Banks of the Foyle

Gulls at the plough's tail and  
rooks in the yellow the  
turnip fields scatterless of  
beast or of bird

Only the ploughman who  
humors his horses a  
child with a milk can and  
never a third

Hedges are naked and  
rain's in the ditches with  
goats here and there on the  
bank as we pass  
whin tips are golden but  
bracken is rusty and  
sheep trample over the  
wind clotted grass

28.1.43 175

Late January Landscape

Mild as September the breath of the weather  
but spilled down the hillsides the black clouds resemble  
the dark cloud of winter that narrows the world  
and black in the ditches the water blood cold

Mile after mile of the wet gleaming ploughland  
the sallows are shaking, their feet in a stream  
only the yoke flecks on whin are a token  
the drake spring is about to begin.



Salute to the Red Army  
from a script for a celebration

February

The Red Army men answers Mother Russia

Mother Russia I am here  
I who was born in the little wooden shacks  
among the great forests  
where the old people still believe in witches  
and in the old cities  
with the bulb-domed churches and the peeling jacobins  
and in the new tall cities of concrete and steel  
that shouting men raised out of the dirt  
from the blueprints of Lenin

Need you ask what I shall do?

I who fought in the streets of Tsaritsin  
who tumbled the proud horses of Denikin  
who wiped the idiot scum  
from the white map of Murmansk  
who caught victory from the jaws of civil war  
and my fell back from Warsaw  
because of a traitor's craft.

I have stood guard for you far in the East there  
when the little men thought to steal your apples & you. and

In the hardest winter of the world  
I staid against the hammerstein line

177

Till tank trap & pill box broke  
and our foolish unteachable brothers cried for mercy.

You taught me Mother to read and spell  
to master the intricacies of machines  
to think - and argue  
and I have gone without my rifle among the villages  
teaching & explaining clean and shaven  
and the crazy witches have run muttering into the forests  
and the children have come out to take my hand & dance  
I have gone back to the workshop bench  
slaving the mechanic the value of micrometer & screw

I who rode hard on the heels of Sudyenny  
who stood silent by Lenin's tomb  
in that silence became more than an army  
becoming the will of a People in arms.

## Dialogue

### Mother Russia

I am Mother Russia: not always old mother Russia  
but young as 80 million children are young  
as young as the newest crèche as the latest playground  
noisy with singing voices and clapping hands  
and I can tell of those tremendous days.

### Red Army men

And I of the Red Army have much to remember  
of the patience learnt in retreat  
of the scathed earth & the blazing station  
of the swamp sabre & the flying grenade  
& the flashing binoculars on the little hill.

### Mother R.

I remember the bread queues & the anxious bulletins  
the yawning gooseflesh nights before the raiders came  
the draughty days in the black-out factories  
the strung hoistays swinging in the square  
the charred planks in the snow  
and the child's body black with the cold  
and the warm voice of Stalin confident  
from the Kremlin  
as the flood waters rose

### R. Army m.

The staccato communique the typescript order  
these were the harsh hexameters of our song  
I could give you the names  
but you already know them  
the names that marked the tide's way & the triumph  
I could give you the names  
I cannot communicate  
the jumble of images in the mind of the partisan  
facing the firing squares  
the held breath of the sniper in the bushes  
the colours of dawn  
over the broken walls of Stalingrad  
the taste of coffee from a tilted flask  
the feel of blood warm between the fingers  
the spreading stain on the grey tunic  
as the bayonet slips out  
the gesture of the men I marched with who is dead  
these memories hurt but we must still remember  
lest the grey type of the text book  
congeal the passion and the grief.

### M. R.

It is enough Red Army. It is enough  
No longer my Red Army but the world's  
The coolie in the rice field, the Kentucky miner  
the Norwegian fisherman the scrubbing woman

the blackman cutting sugarcane the lonely scholar  
the man with test tube held against the light  
You have become the banner over them  
the Jew-pout Slain to which each compares swings  
Only the jobbers sweating will regret  
the pity and the glory of our time.

### Paraphrase of Verses by Mayakovsky

Rally & form in your squads  
No time to quibble or trifle  
This cackles becoming a bore —  
Comrade Rifle  
You have the floor

No longer enslaved by the forces  
of antediluvian gods  
falsified and thunder bereft  
- History hustle of our horses  
Left  
Left  
Left.

4/5. 3. 43 187

### The New Patriot.

Let us have done with the Jew's glory the secret  
vow and the gun in the dark.  
The proclamation the easter lily the game of  
Kilmarnock and Phoenix Park

No word more of Wolfe Tone or Mitchell no hat or  
slogan for Thomas Ash  
For I will remember - a dawn in September the  
shin of the thrushes the garnets splash  
when I first wrote to the wonder of sharing built up  
of leather and granite - and turf  
the rain tanned barley that needed stooking and the  
shags blacknecked in the white of the sun

My Ireland is young as this morning's blackbird that  
sings no song for a day gone by  
but swings on the top of a bush in the wing - and birds  
we welcome the sun in the sky

I'll make my task to wake a alarm you with - jobs to do  
you have left undone  
the bog undrained and the water wasted that belted  
and bound would outglitter the sun,  
things undone that are with the doing, the towns to  
build and the men to befriend  
whose patriot hearts have the skill & the wisdom of we but  
trust them to make and to mend.

13. III. 43

## First Frost

This long mild winter with the rotten leaves  
black in the puddles and the clouded sky  
that hinted but recanted at the snow  
has passed all imperceptibly to spring.  
Already on the chestnut which each year  
is just a tree the varnished sheaths are split  
and birds are noisy in the russet beech  
but whether the stubborn dullness of the war  
(to me not marching nor conformed to march)  
has blurred the lens and focus of my thought  
or whether too much talk of flat ideas  
has superposed between the touch and thing  
I live an abstract life half-revealed

Of late the chill nights and a steady wind  
have shot sharp stars against it, and today  
- a clear bright frost has given the kind of pain  
- a man feels in the limbs that he has lost.

23. III. 43 183

Let no one mock me for my ignorance  
Lay blame on tutors skillers of the craft  
or who compelled advised the clever boys  
and left me to my dreams. Or if you will  
condemn the strain I bent from. These were men  
who save for one deft stout left every track  
of valve or ratchet. Now I walk abroad  
amid a whirling engineering of worlds  
content of eye assume a sympathy  
between a color and a loaded form  
but with no wit for that which this emphasis  
of logic belted easily into service  
My thought untried to high complexity  
will only twang its low & simple chords  
when blunt affections jigger it or when  
Jambhai shapes make motion in the air.

G. M. H.

29. III. 43

This maddened-by-religion Jesuit  
the baroque Hopkins pulpit stalls, distraught  
straining to match his snapping wit  
and smashing words to cup his splashing thought.

## Contra Roma

Your flamethrower victims - are a stubborn crew:  
 in Spain you struck your thousands merciless  
 Your feeble jargon hobbled out to bless  
 the shining bombers sallow braggarts flew  
 against the tubemen's spears.

This is not new  
 and other creeds have met with your sheeps excess  
 but none has dared to claim what you profess  
 or held unaltered usage long as you.

I claim no virtue. There were other men  
 who spoke the true word when to speak was death  
 and others will when your sick power again  
 unleashes the rent venom of its breath.  
 I have but written this that some recall  
 the firing squad and Jesus at the Wall.

## The Irish Dream.

Our curse is pride: we arrogate out towers  
 who have had believe us sons of kings  
 that violence and rhetoric have power  
 to lift us with the strength and grace of wings  
 above the steady labor of the hour  
 that holds the answer its word humble brings  
 The mind denied we trust the tractor least  
 and clutch at cotwells for a reed's support.

We scan a field and where a wise eye  
 would measure out for tractor's room to turn  
 and gauge from weed the close geology  
 that for ordains the binder or the churn  
 we meditate upon the tragedy  
 of dock aettle and are moved to mourn  
 the shadowy banners on the shouting men  
 who revel here and will not rise again.

23. IV. 43

April - May 187  
1943

## Conacre

Now in the spring - a man dare not sit still  
There are so many things that must be done;  
reports the brain must file from pulse and eye  
of cellulose - and salt and chlorophyll,

x The tracky arch crescends of the sun,  
birds' habits and the colors of the sky.  
behavior

x D Galloping

What itch of contradiction makes me find  
no prompting satisfactions for my mind  
to make verse of between grey horse and horse  
save when moon rising thro' the sooty boughs  
recalls familiar frames or when in spring  
one blackbird fills the longer evening  
but like a tippler urgently must go  
to taste pine-resined air and mark below  
moss-cumbered boles the yellow flowers in spate  
or just to gaze at grass across a gate?

I sleep above a flagged resounding street  
and men from shops deliver all I eat  
I burn east-coals and breathe the gritty airs  
and rock in trams about my bristle affairs  
My father also. Last of all my kin  
to live beneath a thatch - and not within  
tall walls was one whose birth goes back from now  
well over a hundred years. The scythe and plow  
are alien to my grasp. I cannot tell  
the weather's chance by glance or oracle  
How far an acre spreads I scarcely guess  
no crop's yield offers sign I may assess.

What love I have is harvested with care  
from buckram books or sometimes here & there

from talkative old men who pause to crack  
on sunny back or from the sagging back  
of mare heeled home from shoeing. I have tried  
to lay my girth on to the man beside  
my elbow at the bar on market-day  
but tho I strive to turn the talk the way  
my hunger clamors he will not be led  
and jobs me off with politics instead.

Why not then seize the virtue in my luck  
and make my theme the riveters who struck  
the often day for solidarity,  
or take a derrick simply as a tree  
and praise a puddle that contains the sky,  
for all the boots and wheels that clatter by?

The lonely person looking for a rod  
along the sheet: the old man deged with god  
howling his gospel, hoarse with prophecy  
the laden soldier with his family  
dragging towards the train; the shuffling strong  
that turn cold shoulders on the busker's song  
the polished horses with the quiet van  
that boasts a war of lifted hats; the men  
who, stumped or blinded squats beside his clogs  
and props a motto on his greasy cap  
poet's flourish on the pavement, hissing snow  
that thumps like sugar on the steps below

old walls in morning sunlight, spiking shower  
of summer rain or dust, the plume and power  
of narrow chimney in the sunset sky  
the bridge bawled jets of clean as trains go by  
nostalgic host from ships that slip by night  
down the dark channel; these by sound or sight  
make up the world my heel and nostril know  
the narrow world my pulses take for true.

But somehow these close images engage  
the prompt responses only, pity humor rage  
and leave the quiet depths unmeasured still  
whereas the leathered shoulder of a hill  
a quick cloud on the meadow wind lashed corn  
black wrinkled haws grey tufted wool on storn  
the high lark singing the reheating sea  
these stab the heart with sharp humility  
and prick like water on the thirsty wrist  
in hill spring thrust when hot sun splits the mist  
among dark peatstacks or long boggy plains  
such as lie high and back between the Glens  
or on the crown of Parnon struck by sun  
to emerald or rain wrapped. I have won  
by grace and by intention to delight  
that seems to match the colours mystic white  
only in places far from tent or street.

For memory's sake indulgent I repeat

the marvel of that dawn when you and I  
rose when the stars commanded all the sky  
and on the dry road under windless skies  
heard the first bird that stirs before light stirs  
and took the steep lane to the blackened crest-  
and stood to see the water's dark unrest  
wet to the knees with dew and shivering  
and watched a black shag cross with hurried wing  
close to the surface of the roaring bay  
We waited for the sun. To the east there lay  
a cloud that hid its rising. Quickly one by one  
the stars were snuffed. We waited for the sun.  
Above cold Parnon's cape in lucid air  
one star remained. The sky was high and bare  
save for that cloud-bank growing golden now  
and little scattered gales in bush and bough  
troubled the dry leaves except the thistle crown  
ripe with the autumn. Where the rack was brown  
small sea-fowl started on their sleek routine  
The peak of Dunigaden now was green  
in brighter light, but still the sun delayed  
We turned disheartened. Suddenly you said  
and pointed 'Look'. Behind above the trees  
a crane necked heron flapped with patient ease  
and passing over flew ahead as if  
slow missile aimed at Scotland. Down the cliff  
chagrined we took our way. The hour was gone  
that should have marked the coming of the dawn

190  
We reached the dewcrisp sand and turned again  
the watered world still lacked the noise of men  
the in the nearest house blue smoke began  
to mingle with the leaves. A rabbit ran  
over the salt short grass. The grazing sheep  
came stumbling from the ledges lame with sleep  
to browse sloop the rough. And then at once  
we strode to where the river cuts the stones  
after a lazy drift bog-brown and slow  
between steep banks where grey leaved sallows grow  
and saw a speckled gannet poise a wing  
to fall like hurtling pebble from a ship  
deadly as David, clean and pitiless  
as later sparrowhawk for wren's distress  
we ran to cleft from ledge in the ledge  
half hid by nettles at the first tree's edge.

Then turning for a last look at the sea  
we gashed amazed. The thing we came to see  
had happened when our Jewish beds were turned  
The cloud had lifted, and below it burned  
hot brass upon the water a bar of sun  
like moon fantastic and the job was done  
Our little world was younger by a day  
and we paced proudly home the longer way  
aware of every freshly spiry scent  
as benediction and as sacrament.



Discarded lines from first draft  
of Comacine

Near this bleak place who knows but men in spring  
may come to worship in this Giants' Ring.  
and fill the level turf with tent and flag  
or bid their shaggy horses strain and drag  
well-carven stones to raise a higher shrine  
where we have smudged our texts in turpentine.

Cowper

A quaking Adam with a brace of Eves  
and a spelt here that lugs his inked sleeves.

203  
28.VI.43

Gonnet: I did not serve

Now in the coil of war I claim a truce  
whose strife was never more than noisy speech  
that one alone upon a roaring beach  
against the heedless breakers might be loose,  
who faced with khaki jungle for excuse  
when fate insists the act I used to preach  
and lays infection equally on each  
and bids men die to prove their bravest use.

I claim a truce because on pulse and thought  
a certain peace descends with circumstance  
by me undreamed unprophesied unsought  
I tried to alter but could not divert  
tried not too hard, not hard enough to hurt  
finding my inclination matched with chance.

28.VI.43

## Summer Evening

Beyond the full-leaved trees, beyond the spire  
the ripening hills lie in the evening sun  
named by their colours to Jambian eye  
as oats and hay and grazing one by one

The brightness lessens from the daisied grass  
lingers upon the walls and slants awhile  
on mellow slate and yellow chimney pot  
til the broad shadow of the western hill  
chills the dark earth and leaves the sky alight  
and brings the windless hour of swifts at play  
as a vague haze obscures the difference  
between the oats the meadow and the hay.

Now almost midnight by the crazy clock  
the swifts swoop home the slow smoke rises straight  
a loose north dusts the window as a bat  
tilts out to chart the swifts' erratic beat.

2.VII.45 205

## Second Front : before the Invasion of Sicily

The crazy clock two hours astray  
defies the angle of the sun  
yet accurately ticks away  
the dropping minutes one by one  
that add their grains to make the date  
our nibbled fingers testify:  
and all the guns of Europe wait  
for all the men who are to die.

23. IX. 43

## Forsaking the Green Ways

Forsaking the green ways or being by them  
forsaken, I walk quietly beneath  
the yellow sheds of beech & lime, aware  
sharply as ever of the ebbing sap  
and earth's skid on the splintered rim of space  
and of my own withdrawal and decline:  
yet not as always peering for the shore,  
counting the petals, twiggling on the thorn  
the clue or cluster, and with anxious pace  
stepping the hunk of sight in my tables  
as cold and edgy as a frosted leaf,  
but knowing now that somewhere in my heart  
the far sea tosses pond a fleck and plank,  
a white face drowning and two gasping hands,  
the lank hair bobbing in the bladder creek;  
and that I need for noose or barbed cross  
to grapple, slip and grip from bubbled mine  
some shape heraldic that has stood & will stand  
for brown men falling in root-written swamps  
as much as for the grave cloud-Tomswid clerk  
set with a griffin in his manuscript

20.X.43 207

I wake & wonder at the morning world  
dropping its turps and jumping fists of rain  
into the narrow puddles; or today  
-printing the wet leaf on the frosted kerb,  
as the black rook with heavy flagging beat  
cruises across the wide & crystal light,  
as if no thousands sheets & oak staves  
by river cliff or left in screaming air  
and no heart breaks as dusk passes over  
the photograph upon the mantelpiece.

20.X.43

When men at corners or with elbows propped  
map out event by hearsay or expound  
their sidewalk tactics, though my rest with prompts  
the cynic answer to the statesman's craft  
a beg's bent across the web of words  
with the bright scalpel honed on Lenin's phrase,  
my lip grips sudden. I am fed & roofed,  
or can create the lonely circumstance,  
in ten years time, when men with withered life  
swap names of places in the history books,  
& I must still keep silence, uninvolved.

## War's Luckholding

Out of the mill & mixture of the moment  
 what hours are born to mock the love crossed letter?  
 What stranger's smile shall lean from lonely cradle  
 to thrust the round heart shaking in the throat?  
 The posted hours beside the crumpled table  
 are far too much for yawning mind to pocket,  
 and where is his authority's salute  
 who must play batman to Egyptian star?

So bite the swinging apple from the string  
 nor worry for the stain upon the spoon.  
 The jingered rose shall know no second spring  
 when Enchanted Order rolls a shanty home.  
 Press close against whatever offers comfort,  
 the rifle's butt, the randy foreman's arm.

Before gooseflesh grows feathers pray observe  
 the tall dark man who reads the small black book  
 He has no magic: particle - and verb  
 shea no stigmata - fingerprints for his luck:  
 he runs by rote; the angel Jacob fought  
 has not massaged a message on his bones.  
 You look for truth, the blood on Joseph's coat  
 is the sole choice clue his history contains.

So turn northeast, or back behind the stones  
 or tonging at the turf, and you shall hear  
 the suck of saps that dredging thro' the loins  
 knocks on the rocks along the shining shore  
 and out, far out the dolphin in the calm  
 splashes the air & takes great bubbles down.

I had the hope to leave but two strange poems  
 whined from the shadows urging me to stay;  
 and the round naphtha of my careful method  
 could not avert my curiosity.

The first that came was scaled with joining gestures  
 and croaked a sobbing threnody on faith,  
 winking the work of bladderwrack and coral  
 and proving sand a better shroud than cloth.

The second wore an undershirt of feathers  
 and, vision hunched, foamed red alert to fly,  
 their sudden thunder to the hick with the others  
 to find their tongues remind them of the sea;

and I am left to rip my wrist on mollusc,  
 to hate the taste, & howling die of thirst.

I cried to Christ. No sequel to my toxin  
 beaded upon the glass. The bread of life  
 was never treaded by an avid locksmith:  
 his sterile bottle sops no crumbled loaf.  
 Too long I gummied the dust. Too long I lived  
 by harsh arc lamps that hung above the earth  
 beneath the stars too distant to be loved  
 and cheated by the piping of the heart.

Each column added gives erratic total  
 that leaks a blood-rimmed den for my debt-  
 to the bone-browed and rocky desert people  
 whose lips move only till the fire be lit,  
 and I must coax my ear to spell an answer  
 to the grave meaning of the feathered dance.

Sept 25 1925

25.1.43

For one who did not march

What bannered pardon slipping on the mast  
shall wait the crooked heels of those who come?  
There will be saws to loath, & much to happen  
before the flicked switch steers the tired cows home:  
and one will hide behind a lumpy fable  
on point to card on table's alibi;  
on bluffing out the sequence smear the petals  
in lettered lamels & a brass jingle.

My hope is other, will accept the cynic,  
the envy for the lack, the limits entire,  
be scarce & quiet pocketing the glass  
glad of the better hours I was awake,  
for so I must contain as bottle takes  
the fluent water & confers a shape.

Book  
BOL

213  
24/26-27.X.

October Sonnets - 1

Now striding through the reaped & written year,  
the stacks black in the fields, the stubble grey,  
& the red sun at either end of day  
slipping through mist, one star at twilight clear  
but later lost in a throated hemisphere,  
the children's voices shudder in their play,  
the sycamore's broad rags that sprawl & splay  
bring back the hours that make October dear.

For closely seen the wings their leaves have sparred  
& you shall see the black buds on the tips  
that urge their way toward repeated springs,  
& yet before that consummation's earned  
there are the days when breath shall feather lips  
with the true songs that only winter sings.

Book  
B.M.

27.7

## Sonnets in October - II

Now who dare say in autumn: This is new: -  
ripeness & leaf-fall, harvest of desire,  
the year's grey phoenix nested on the pyre  
the choking smoke that lifts the phoenix throat;  
the spring-lipped hopes that by junction drew  
a row in rich patriety retire -  
Yes fling these watered words upon the fire;  
yet say of autumn that they still are true.

For in October born, my veins have kept,  
whatever men with lens & blade deny  
about the implications of the blood,  
a sober joy that squirrel-curved has slept  
till wakened by the flame in leaf & wood  
for all the coloured summers crowded by.

12.XI.43 215

## November Gale

Already gale rounds off the season's end  
& branches snap that, shaking stubborn leaves,  
were challenge to the heart that wished them bare.  
The oak was sullen, when the elm & beech  
threw down their largesse willingly, as you  
have never flung your pennies in a cap,  
its scarcely fingered foliage rustled far  
but spined with rap. The blowsy sycamore  
flaunted its ragged cuffs but made no bow  
as some hag actress who will not retire.

But now the wind's cold besom bids them fly  
and when tomorrow's sun tobs up again  
a wellscoured nature will salute its glance  
as the expectant waiting for the thought  
that once more wrestle with mortality.

Beethoven's Archduke Trio Op. 97  
(written during a gramophone recital)

Come now with me, the music bids, and share  
life's mellow summer indolently fair  
with heart enough to love, while still the eyes  
are lifted to horizons of surprise.

Too swift for answer, it interrogates  
them leaps ahead and arrogantly states  
the master's proud opinion that his will  
makes our defeated day incredible.

Then suddenly solemnity pervades  
the summer texture with autumnal shades.  
A sober tripping lilt of string and key  
sums all the humours of our tragedy.  
The violin asserts, is tentative . . .  
The string piano summons it to give  
compassion to the cheated lonely heart  
that walks with its small lanterns apart.

But the grave shapes of season & of tide  
proclaim the wiser comforts that abide  
and set us free to look into the sun,  
the course of breath magnificently run.

## The Lyric Lost

The whispered phrase, the rhythm of speech,  
the slack word buttoned into sense,  
the careful hours I give to each,  
the dull ear's cautious diligence  
have left my mind incapable  
of what had once the lilt & oar  
of thought that bids the sun farewell  
or skylark failing of the sky.



The artist does not, or should not, set out primarily to teach, or preach, or to represent; he may of course do any or all of these things, but insofar as he lets any of them interfere with his real work, the creation of a work of art & its communication to others, the less artist he. That is why the beautiful subject, the startling, the obscure, or the unpleasant are dangerous material: & that is why the subject-matter of so much great art is commonplace or unobtrusive.

The Five Arts: F.E. Halliday p. 254.  
1946

Yet, where there is high excellence in the work, labour in the execution, there volume, amount, quantity tells & helps to perpetuate all. If you wrote a considerable poem more it would not only add to your works & give it its own weight or its own buoyance, but it would buck out & buoy up all the rest.

Stoptkins to Patmore quoted in  
Derek Patmore's Portrait of my Family p. 193  
1935.

It has now become clear to me what a wearisome & hopeless task the lyric must be at certain periods, simply because it works with the instruments of speech & does not entail sufficient handwork to enable you to develop it into an independent entity (this is meant not in the artistic, but in a purely vital, sense)

The workmanlike output which this other pen adumbrates should not work back into your own life, should be a design, an alchemy, a transmutation of which the "I" was only the first & last stimulus, but which from then on remains facing you, sprung from your own impulses yet instantly thrust out again so far upon the plane of artistic estrangement, of thing-like solitude, that you only feel yourself sharing in the completion of this mysterious object like some spirit deputy. p. 401-2  
Letter 126

I used to write on the coarse rolls of paper used by paperhangers, pinning them to the wall & printing my verses in big charcoal letters. Then I wd. pace back & forth before them, studying them, repeating them, trying them perfect. I wanted to appeal to the eye as well as to the ear. I tried to avoid any literary quality. Verse, not poetry, is what I was after - something the man in the street wd take notice of & the sweet old lady wd take in her album something the schoolboy wd sport at the fellow in the pub wd quote. Yet I never wrote to please anyone but myself; it just happened I belonged to the simple folk whom I liked to please.  
R. W. Service: Ploughman of the North (1946) p. 384.

What has not worked in me! Some because of their perfection, others because you immediately realised they could be done better or differently. This, because you recognised it as belonging to you & having authority; that, because it rose up like an enemy, unseizable, almost unendurable.

But often I ask myself whether things that in themselves are without emphasis have not exerted the realiest influence on my development & productivity: the acquaintance of a dog; the hours I passed in Rome watching a rope-maker reiterating one of the oldest gestures in the world in his craft, as did the potter in a little village by the Nile; to stand beside his wheel was inexpressibly & in a most-mysterious sense fruitful for me. . . . all this was "influence," was it not? - and perhaps the greatest of all has yet to be named: that I could be alone in so many cities, lands and clinics, undisturbed, exposed to the new & unfamiliar with all the multiplicity, all the listening & obedience of my nature, wanting to belong & yet again compelled to lift my self away. . .

Letter 80 Pt 3 p. 380-1

Think of the poet as somebody who has prepared himself to be visited by a daemon, as a sort of accident-prone worker to whom poems happen. A good poet - is someone who manages, in a lifetime of standing out in thunderstorms, to be struck by lightning just six times; a dozen or two times and he is great.

Randall Jarrell: Poetry as the Life (1955) p. 136.

Anyway, if I were young now, I would definitely look round for some daily, very heterogeneous sort of occupation & try to establish myself on some concrete territory in accordance with my strength. Perhaps one serves art today better & more wisely if one makes it the silent, secret avocation of certain days or years. . . . A re-orientation can only come about through those silent individuals who do not count themselves among the crowd & who accept none of the usages which the literary fanciers have put in circulation. Whether such individuals are private persons or whether they hide modestly behind some skilled craft, they will play their part in remedying a situation that has long been impossible, all the more since their literary silence will look highly significant beside their deepest eloquence.

Pt 3 p. 360  
(March 1922) Letter 37

Our conflicts have always been a part of our riches, & when we are terrified of their violence we are only terrified of the unsuspected possibilities & tensions of our own strength; and chaos, if we can but win a little detachment from it, instantly evokes in us the foreknowledge of new orders and, in so far as our courage can have any share in such preparations, the curiosity & desire to accomplish that still unscrutable future order.

Pt 3 p. 367  
Letter 45

To keep our inward conscience clear & to know whether we can take responsibility for our creative experiences just as they stand in all their truthfulness & absoluteness: that is the basis of every work of art, & art such as this could be provided produced even if we cut away all ground from beneath our feet, provided that we kept our inspiration continually at concert-pitch.

Rilke Selected Letters 130 P. 308 Pt 2

No book, and no encouragement either, can work anything decisive unless he whom it concerns is prepared by wholly unperceivable factors for a deeper reception & acceptance: unless the hour of communion with it has nevertheless come. Then, any old thing is enough to push that hour into the centre of consciousness: sometimes a book or an object of art, sometimes the glance of a child, the voice of man or bird, yes, in some cases the sound of the wind, a crack in the floor - or, sitting by the fireplace gazing into the changing shapes of the flames. All these & many more trivial things, seemingly fortuitous, may cause & lend strength to such a finding & re-finding of oneself ...

Selected Letters 14 P. 334-5 Pt 3

The fierce pulsations of industry, the shiftings of gold that make and men human happiness - these art themes reserved for the bard of the future who shall strike, bravely, a new chord, extracting from the sombre facts of city life a throbbing, many-tinted romance, even as out of that foul coal-tar some, who know the secret, craftily distil most delicate perfumes and colours exquisite. The bard of the future ... L'm! Will he ever appear? As an atomism, perhaps. Take away from modern poetry what appeals to primitive man - the jingle and pathetic fallacy - and the residue, if any, would be better expressed in prose.

Norman Douglas: "Fountains in the Sand" (1st publ 1912) [Penguin 1944 P. 35]

I lack the simile, the inwardly perceptible parallel ... which alone turns an impression into an experience

Rilke Selected Letters 104 P. 291 Pt 2

... I have regretted, often & often, not having some daily profession which, independent of the streamings of grace is always, every day, purely feasible.

Pt 3 Letter 19 P. 348

Poetry and prose are different things; their provinces overlap, but must not be confused. Prose, of course, is free of all fields; it seemed to me, reading poetry and trying to write it, that poetry is bound to consider concern itself chiefly with permanent things and the permanent aspects of life. That was perhaps the great distinction between them, as regards subject a material.

Prose can discuss matters of the moment; poetry must deal with things that a reader two thousand years away could understand and be moved by. This excludes much of the circumstance of modern life, especially in the cities. Fashions, forms of machinery, the more complex social, financial, political adjustments, and so forth, are all ephemeral, exceptional: they exist but will never exist again. Poetry must concern itself with (relatively) permanent things. These have poetic value; the ephemeral has only news value.

Robinson Jeffers p. XIV-XV Foreword to  
The Selected Poetry of R. J. (1938)

[The poet] may be used as the barometer, but let us not forget that he is also part of the weather  
Lionel Trilling: The Liberal Imagination (1951) p. 190

The poetry of mere description is of all verse the dreariest and the most inept; all poetry which describes in detail, however magnificent, falls on us when persisted in.

A. Symonds: Introduction to  
Browning p. 23 (1886)

The art of the pen is to rouse the inward vision, instead of labouring with a Duf-seene brush, as if it were to the eye; because our flying minds cannot contain a protracted description. That is why the poets who spring imagination with a word or a phrase paint lasting pictures:

Meredith: One of the Crossways  
vol 1 p. 339 [q in Symonds]

The poet is dependent upon representation. The latter reaches its highest point when it emulates reality; that is to say, when the descriptions it gives us are rendered in so vivid and spirited a manner that every one might look upon them as actually occurring. At its highest, poetry appears entirely external; the further inwards it retreats, the lower it sinks.

Goethe: Reflections & Maxims  
ed. Rompfelt [N.D.]

[Russian poetry] - prefers the quiet phrase, the understatement, the precise significant word . . . .  
[Russian poets] are interested in its most ordinary [natural] manifestations, the coming of spring, the presence of clouds in the sky, the sudden onrush of storms, the breaking of the ice, the effects of snow . . . . Content to see and enjoy nature as it is, as something apart from man and even from God.

C. M. Bowra Intro. p. XV

A Book of Russian Verse  
1943

We insist that the rhyme shall cost nothing to the ideas, that it shall neither be trivial nor too far fetched; we exact rigorously in a verse the same purity, the same precision, as in prose. We do not admit the smallest license; we require an author to carry without a break all these chains, and yet that he should appear even free.

Notes p. 195.

London Lyrics: Lambson 1904

The greatest tragedy of art is the inability of the artist justly to realise his dreams. The pure artist, like pure gold, wastes too rapidly in use. He requires a touch of alloy to make him fit for the world's purposes, to make him content to withdraw his hand from a masterpiece while yet it might be bettered.

Sir William Armstrong:

Art in Great Britain and Ireland.

Thrift is the great principle in style . . . We begin with redundancy and end with severity.

Letter 52.

The Poet is primarily not a thinker, but he is a thinker and a stern thinker, since the source of his magic is his personal sincerity. What he says he believes, and from this it follows that he must have few beliefs - and those of the simplest, for time will not allow him to be travelling over the whole world of thought

Letter 147

Poets love sincerity not because of high morality, but because they love freedom. Freedom is the condition of their existence . . . Marriage is to the solitary who is behind every man and most of all behind the poet, a hermitage and a fenced solitude

Letter 76

Democratic art is that sort which unites a whole audience - is not an oratorical democratic? - and the great religious services - and cathedrals - and military pomp and oratory, when on a large scale

Letter 59

J. B. Yeats: Letters to his son and others  
1869-1922

ed. Hone 1944.

Although rich men of herds, merchants and people who put out money to grow, think that great is the blindness and want of sense to compose a poem .... nevertheless it is by me understood that they are very greatly deceived, because their herds and their heavy riches shall go by like a summer joy, but the scientific work shall be there to be seen for ever.

Andrew MacLurkin to Jas. MacDonnell  
1718-43 [Hyde p. 546/7]

A measure will always be a new measure when it expresses a new man

Sir H. Newbolt "New Paths in  
Hebrew" p. 373

The conception of the myths as "high-tension" poetical interpretations of actual observations, and of their form as an 'export' shape, is helped, perhaps, by the German word for poetry, Dichtung, literally: "that which has been condensed, tightened, or packed into the smallest possible space"

H.S. Bellamy: "Moons Myths & War"  
p. 58

The poet is he that hath fat enough, like bears and marmots, to suck his claws all winter... He should be as vigorous as a sugar-nettle, with sap enough to maintain his own verdure.

H. D. Thoreau: A Week on Concord  
[Sunday p. 84]

Definitions of Poetry carry no permanent authority. They only draw attention to certain qualities by exalting them - and that is to the good. But they also check response to others previously enjoyed - and that is not... The only verdicts which change little are those concerned with accomplishment: did a poet attain his aim? In that court... decisions are seldom rescinded.

Desmond MacCarthy

Sunday Times 21.11.43  
Review of "Junius"

The Irish bards tend to the "maintenance of their own lewde libertie, they being most desirous thereof"

Ed. Spenser

Q. Douglas Hyde:

"Literary History of Ireland"  
p. 495

as the generations go by and the field of English poetry is more and more thoroughly worked the possibility of lasting achievement in it becomes more difficult than ever. But the practice of that great art and the acceptance of its fruitful traditions has still other uses: to add a page or a phrase to the national achievement is worth a lifetime of its pursuit, but even to continue its living practice in a time of recession is to partake in its next great blossoming, though perhaps only by the work itself becoming part of a soil and compost of dead leaves in which the new seeds shall strike.

Note to "Poems of 30 Years": Gordon Bottomley.

To make verse speak the language of prose, without being prosaic, to marshal the words of it in such an order as they might naturally take in falling from the lips of an extemporary speaker, yet without meanness, harmoniously, elegantly, and without seeming to displace a syllable for the sake of the rhyme, is one of the most arduous tasks a poet can undertake.

W. Cowper letter to Rev. W. Unwin 17.I.1782

[The poem] begins in delight, it inclines to the impulse, it assumes direction with the first line laid down, it runs a course of lucky events, and ends in a clarification of life - not necessarily a great clarification, such as sects & cults are founded on, but in a momentary stay against confusion ... It is but a trick poem as no poem at all if the best of it was thought of first & saved for the last. It finds its own name as it goes - discovers the best waiting for it in some final phrase at once wise and sad.

The impressions most useful to my purpose seem always those I was unaware of & so made no note of at the time when taken, and the conclusion is come to that like giants we are always hurling experience ahead of us to have the future with against the day when we may want to strike a line of purpose across it for somewhere.

taken a piece of ice on a hot stove the poem must melt on its own melting. A poem may be worked over once it is in being, but may not be worked into being. Its most precious quality will remain its having run itself & carried away the rest with it.

'The Figure a Poem makes'  
Foreword to "Collected Poems"  
Robert Frost 1939.

The only really important question about any poet is not whether he is modern, but whether he can become part of the past in which all great poets are contemporaries.

George Sampson: "Concise Cambridge Hist of Eng. Lit." p. 1004

To describe a dreadnought is no more new than to describe a galley. What is new is that one should feel in the poem the rhythm of a dreadnought, as Racine evokes the pomp of a galley.

J. Cocteau of Sitwell Poets' Notebooks p. 24

A true poet does not trouble about the poetical. In the same way as a horticulturist does not scent his roses; he makes them follow a system that perfects their cheeks & their breath.

do. p. 35

... The noun in its substantial majesty, the adjective, a transparent vestment that clothes and covers it... and the verb, angel of movement.

C. Baudelaire do p. 45

"The theme is nothing; the life is everything. Give me simple, cheap and lonely themes. I omit the unusual - the hurricanes and earthquakes, and describe the common. This has the greatest charm, and is the true theme of poetry. Give me the obscure life, the cottage of the poor and humble, the work-days of the world, the barren fields"

H. D. Thoreau quoted by H. S. Salt in his "Life of T." p. 173 <sup>which edition?</sup>

Now, as immortality or lasting status is the test by which all poets would best like to succeed, the practical problem for them and their critic is to divine what themes and what handling will best and longest stir assenting emotion - whether impassioned appeal or brooding reverie, or grave counsel, or ecstatic cry, or impersonal expression and transcription of things and thoughts felt to be beautiful or otherwise memorable.

J. M. Robertson: "Substance in Poetry" English Review July 1911

[The poet] must make form and substance sustain each other; his sincerity of emotion preserving form, and the love of form purifying his matter. (Ibid)



Rodin's il faut toujours travailler came to him like a revelation - that poetry, if it was to be worth anything, must be as laborious as sculpture; that he must resist the temptation to write facile poems, laments, and confessions, and must instead concentrate with minute attention upon things and persons (real or legendary) outside himself, and, having apprehended their significance, attempt to convey it in the fewest and fittest words.

J. B. Leishman on R. M. Rilke  
also to Selected Poems (Hogarth)

Even if your work comes out of yourself it must begin and end in itself; its form must be so perfectly complete that there is no space in it for anything else, not even for you; not even for your personality, not even for your ambition, for nothing of that in which your ego finds itself, and in which it takes its pleasure.

Karel Čapek in his best novel  
"The Cheat" p. 128 from review in "The Listener"  
1941

The best poetry is always about the earth itself and all the strange and lovely things that compose and inhabit it. When a great poet sets himself the task of some 'big theme' he needs only to hold as it were a magnifying glass to the earth.

Herold Monro: Introduction to an Anthology  
"The Year's at the Spring" (1920)

235  
[The function of literature] has to do with maintaining the very cleanliness of the tools, the health of the very matter of thought itself. When the very medium [of the literature], the very essence of their work, the application of word to thing goes rotten it becomes slushy and inexact, or excessive or bloated, the whole machinery of social or of individual thought goes to pot. This is a lesson of history, and a lesson not yet half learned.

E. Pound: "How To Read" pp 17-18

It is not metres, but a methemaking argument, that makes a poem.

R. W. Emerson: The Poet  
in "Essays"

The very act of writing and rhyming is a call boy to the unconscious  
Herbert Read "Annals of  
Innuence etc."

... for art is the song of social man  
A. Ozonfant "Journey thro' life" p. 398

There can be no real poetry that will effectually touch either the heart or the imagination that has not its foundation in experience of existing facts or in knowledge of facts that have existed in times past

S. Ferguson Dublin Univ. May 1840

This is the true test of poetic power, that it stirs the hearts of men deeply and widely by the direct agency of simple and intelligible language

Ferguson on Burns 1859

The lasting praises of the generations are not to be obtained by intricate conceited or curious compositions.

This

Many of the older poets, such as Villon & Herrick and Burns, used the whole of their personal life as their material, and the verse written in this way was read by strong men, & thieves, & deacons, not by little cliques only.

It is the timber of poetry that wears most surely, & there ~~can~~ is no timber that has not strong roots among the clay and worms.

J. M. Synge: Preface to "Poems"

The use of Poetry hath been to give some shadow of satisfaction to the mind of man in those points wherein the nature of things doth deny it, ... by submitting the shows of things to the desires of the mind  
F. Bacon "Advancement of Learning"

There is no statute law of the Kingdom bids you be a poet against your will.

The chief virtue of a style is perspicuity  
B. Jonson "Discoveries"

It is the prerogative of every lover of his Country to use the instrument of his thought, which is the Mother-tongue, with propriety and distinction; to keep that reverently clean and bright, which lies at the root of his mental life, and so, by extension, of the life of the community  
C. M. Doughty  
Dawn in Britain

Many attempted 'definitions' of poetry are simply descriptions of the critic's feelings on reading poems which seem to him to be good

M. Roberts "Critique of Poetry" 1864

The bad poet can more easily urge that  
his thoughts are too advanced for mankind  
to appreciate than that his melody is too  
sweet for their ears to catch

F. W. H. Myers. "Wordsworth"

Lucidity [which] is the aesthetic equivalent  
of good manners

C. Day Lewis ["Scattering Branches"]

There is no fine form to be won from  
unresisting matter

Lawrence Binyon

The mind of a great poet is a mirror  
endowed with the power of collecting the  
diffused & broken light of experience &  
reverberating it in one bright focal ray  
of consummate expression.

Good poetry is always - an account of  
facts, facts of the senses, or of thought  
and passion and imagination

Aldous Huxley on "Richard  
Maddleton"  
in Ward's Poets [red vol]

Poetry is the suggestion, by the imagination, of  
noble grounds for the noble emotions

J. Ruskin Mod. Painters III

... old say under that word,  
... some <sup>great</sup> ~~best~~ <sup>new</sup> ~~old~~ <sup>new</sup> ~~old~~  
... all <sup>great</sup> ~~best~~ <sup>new</sup> ~~old~~ <sup>new</sup> ~~old~~  
... to which is lent  
... for merit - even  
... that ~~case~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~debate~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~debate~~  
... as well as <sup>is</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~is~~  
... to which the given ~~is~~  
... over the ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~is~~  
... & continued

Deliberators  
Lille

There's a light at the end of the tunnel

a boy  
like  
a boy  
will long  
be strong  
and clear  
to see  
will be  
so free  
to be  
and dead

the boy  
taken  
we pray  
to pray  
be dear

to light  
- not  
the flight  
to light  
sted  
- can  
- can  
the  
- can

not these  
the close  
to those  
and these  
the can  
will find  
the end  
is blind

↑  
Diameter  
of Stone  
Double Ring



15 hours  
the time  
of day  
and night  
despite  
one year

any  
all an  
year

209  
There are people in the world, a few, who  
carry into the art of living, consciously  
or not, a certain grace, a certain  
finesse, a certain sense of style,  
which redeems them from the sterile  
futility of most human struggling.  
They suffer, they grow old, they are  
forgotten; but they were never ugly  
nor squalid, nor ridiculous.  
If anything can justify the world, it  
is its beauty; and they were part of that.  
F. L. Lucas "Eight Victorian Poets"

The poet ... is a man of extraordinarily  
sensitive and active subconscious  
personality fed by and feeding a  
non-resistant consciousness.

Amy Lowell

The poet does not know himself subjectively at all. He  
knows himself, as M. Maublanc happily puts it, by the fact  
that "things resound in him". He knows himself by his grasp  
of the phenomenal world. He knows himself first affective  
union with a landscape or a lover, a still-life or a  
Scandinavian cat. He knows himself through the object and  
his transposition of the object into art.

Review T.L.S. 25.XII.53 of  
Jacques Maublanc *Creative Intuition and the Poet*  
N.Y.

