

EXILE

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Another year, and another move for we wandering Exiles. Now back in Suffolk after a fraught two years in Kent, with apologies for any post that has gone astray.

With no books to review this session, I will keep things brief. My epic poem, *Girders in the Sand*, is building slowly as I chase the history of science across the planet and through time, searching for ultimate meaning for mankind. The journey has thus far taken fifteen years; but I am ever hopeful that it will be finished, though increasingly it looks as though it will appear in the new millennium. Remember, you read about it first in *Exile*.

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THE ATTIC

My mind is like an attic,
stored with disorganised junk
fragments of images, symbols and thought,
suddenly erupting from transient trunks.

I am a hoarder,
a collector of lost moments in time
that parade out from cloistered depths
when lightening conducts a musical rhyme.

Cobwebs and dust scatter when trumpets blow
to herald a rumbling roller-coaster's roar
jingling daydreams, slicker lazily
then rampaging icons pound on the door.

Take a escalating ride to a gallery,
where visions of life hang in disarray
to be moved on reflection of jumble, makes it all worth storing
away.

R. SOPER CHIPPING NORTON

CREATIVITY SHALL SURVIVE

two coffee-table books lie here,
gathering dust,
yet admired as relics of art:

the Tibetan Potala - high up, long admired
as the pinnacle of Shangri-La,
now a potent symbol of Chinese seizure,
and this glossy books smells of
superficiality-produced for tourists,
but an utter failure and contemptible.

Derek Jarman's Garden, nestling proudly
and bursting with colour next to
Nuclear destructivity -
here he watered and loved and nurtured
and on such a small natural scale;
his ability and vision transpires,
and on each passing anniversary of Derek's
moving out of physical pain, a new bloom
erupts, lovingly witnessed and relished
by just a small culture.

Two books just, displaying, in different
strengths, what is good and pure and
honest.

JAMES MURRAY-WHITE CAMBRIDGE

BEIRUT

Destruction covers the ground of solid buildings
That once stood in Beirut
How the people from the other countries
Shielded themselves from the truth
Bullets fired into the night
Into the day
We all shouted 'stop'
And blood that was vivid into our eyes
with tears of joy and pain
Massacre the innocent
When dead,
We then believe you
Those who survive
Are not brave
Nor are they the heroes
That fight into the night
Shattered bodies hardly walk
All too frail
To our plane and helpless faces
The guns that glisten in the heat
Time and temper
Running out
Sweat pours down their faces
Hoping that another bullet
Won't be fired
Another life gone
And truly forgotten

ELAINE DAY ROMFORD

IN CONTINUUM

Back from exile the outlawed maker steals
 To repair the modern century's broken lyre;
 For there has been a death in the hearts of men
 A slow quenching of the quixotic fire.

None shall know the poet is in his place,
 All shall slumber on in the songless spell
 Till without warning suddenly awakened
 By resumed music from the forgotten well.

PAMELA CONSTANTINE ESSEX

THE BEACH

lily pads where the children frolicked
 in the lazy waters that bend and fold
 the beach sand now carries the water's print
 no feet and fingers to crease and mould
 adding their voice to the wind-soaked waves
 rushing to the beach only to pause
 and rest the new with trembling tow
 so many days have come between, still come and go,
 yet all remains in one sleepless dream
 and in a way the beach remains
 though carrying the weight of my early days
 ever-willing to accommodate and seems to say
 "hello again, my how you've changed!"

JIM W FAYLE CANADA

Let me christen another day with you,
For I will lead you to a morning filled with dreams,
And show you a sun shining hope,
I will walk you through an evening of memories
And I will kiss you in the night with love.

MAURICE SUCKLING OXFORD

RHYTHM AND BLUES

(For Lisa and Ronan)

Night-time, about twelve o'clock, in your city bed-sits
will find you practising the major-minor barres
and you'll feel the steel strings cut your finger-tips
as if they were a hot knife slicing candle-wax.

But imagine the shavings on the workshop floor,
rosewood being tapered, the incision of the frets,
and take courage, your fingers on the sounding board
will soon free the music in that hardwood's resilience.

ART MURPHY CO DOWN

When I was about eleven,
I went to Ormesby Comprehensive School.
I was happy there.
I enjoyed my five years.

A teacher called Ian Smith asked me
If I would like to join a club.

He took me to Clairville Stadium
with a friend called Jane.

We trained in Middlesbrough Cleveland Harriers.

I was not aware I was disabled until
I started at Ormesby comprehensive.

This discovery was a shock.

NADEEM MALIK MIDDLESBROUGH

I want to live in a valley of dreams
where nothing is ever quite what it seems
where the passing of ether days come and goes
and lover's embalming stream down hill flows
seasons become days of autumn sunflowers
and the sun shone whiles away the hours
the birds are purest bright fluorescent grey
web amber snowflakes amok gloom away
fireflies enhance once diluted vision
and zephyrs conduct the trees precision
The angels become a blaze of illumination
and the fancy becomes a declaration
the lighthouse signals to the earth's deep core
it was always a dream and nothing more.

DEREK STEPHENS BEVERLEY

The Wayside Inn

In verdured fields, where dreams take rhyme,
 I dreamt of life and its full mystery:
 A wide and endless highway stretched through time
 With speeding souls conveyed on God's long journey.

Then came a slip-road to a wayside inn;
 Some few pulled off to pause for food or song,
 Or converse, to discuss the road with kin,
 Before embarking to rejoin the throng.

Here birth's an exit, and the entry's death;
 The milling crowds— the lands wherein we've strayed;
 Yet, in that dream, the inn was but a breath
 Wherein all life's variety is played.

Our clutch to this temporal hut is vain,
 For death but starts our journey once again.

John Marr

Suffolk

A copy of this poem, which resulted from a dream on hearing of Cardinal Basil Hume's cancer and imminent death, was sent to him at Westminster. It is dedicated to his memory.

Poem 1

He died, and relatives threw
 all he had held most dear
 into black, plastic sacks
 until not a single memory remained.
 Not letter, card,
 sweet moments of a cold seaside day,
 nothing left to say
 he had ever existed—
 ever once breathed air—
 save relatives of blood
 standing coldly there,
 selling house for his life's share.

**Poem 2**

It all seemed so clear once,
 no doubts lay here,
 choices all were best,
 decisions easily made, weighed,
 acted upon. But limbs grow old;
 older still was soul
 who would not decide on life,
 her own, let alone others—
 tugging at slipping skirts—
 old age brings more than wrinkled skin,
 and breath's short measure,
 life's joy and expectation
 fall at the first
 forcing immobility and stagnant pleasure.

Ann Elliott

Suffolk

I.M.

Listen, to the silence.

Now the engine's stopped
and the hedges
no longer brush our sides &
we are enclosed.

Listen, to the silence.

That sun glaring vista behind,
that narrow lane splashed
by light, rays of green
swathed in rustles of night.

Listen, to the silence.

The evening's luminous gold;
full, my ears, stunned,
deaf to all things even eyes
which glisten far away

where the silence listens.

C.A.W. Williamson PARIS

AMBER

Like the blood in hypothermia, the sap
Sinks, like mercury, to the bulb. It sets,
Syrupy sweet, in the ice smashed gap.
In the autumn glad a spent man forgets
The climb. The amber grips the dank black bark,
The thin trunked trees, like limbs, in a tear
Of crystallising ormolu. The dark
Comes like an impurity, woods disappear,
Burnt saffron, into a caesarean starred sky -
Dying hearth embers viewed from afar.
The amber cataract grows round the eye,
The weak leaves cooling on the forest floor,
The world is full of poets, what need one more?

JONATHAN MORRISON OXFORD

WINTER MOURNING

Kneeling, I rub frost from the headstone,
 revealing your gold embossed name;
 and as your memory starts
 to touch parts of me no sense can reach,
 my mind wanders to private times past.....
 then, an icy blast slaps my face,
 forcing me to this place
 where dawn breaks quietly as a heart.

CHRIS MAJOR NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME

SPACE

We move forward, find
 the space between the words
 the circled chairs. You
 say, I don't know what
 to say, or how to use
 what's said, I say the same.

The sunlight whispers in
 the echo room, a lizard
 hiss that's lost among
 the separate shadows, where
 we sit and cannot speak.

BRENDAN McMAHON DERBY

SCHIZOPHRENIA

(a kind of mental Diaspora
with no one to pick up the pieces)

"What a silly woman" the voices
say, but God, God, he surely He
would not say "What a silly
woman" He would say
nothing or "beloved daughter"
in whom whether or not
I am well pleased
I suffer

and once her father
up from the South peering
through a porthole of the sealed ward
was God, and sometimes he is
her father, Father untouchable

but her mother blows in witchy close
her mother is She-Devil
talking to the psychiatrists,
choking Maidie with smoky eyes.

"Ac-cen-tu-ate the positive"
Don't mess with Mr In-Between;
he is the Devil see-saw mind.
Don't mess with him,"

over and over in her head
and she, locked in this leaning
tower like a bloated nun
in some Inquisitional convent.

SUSAN McCASLIN CANADA

CHURCH

the notice
outside the church
read
"are you lost?
without
Jesus Christ
everyone is.

I guess
that's why
only Christians
attend the church

nobody else
can find it

COLIN CROSS NORWICH

LAZARUS

Nothing, at first. And then the shout,
penetrating nothingness.
Lazarus!
Come out!

It echoes though the cave. I rise
still clothes in my own winding sheet;
I stagger with the cloth around my feet,
blindfolded by the linen round my eyes.

I hear astonished voices. I do not understand
that I'm alive. I smell the wind. I feel the sun.
The bandages fall off, undone
by a familiar woman's hand.

I know these folk. I recognise this place.
And there he is: we stumble to embrace.
With joy and awe I see the trace
of tears that streak his fierce and gentle face.

DAVID PRATT MONMOUTH

SON

I near the age he fathered me,
his third-born son. That a man so
little given to ambition
for self, driven by a boy's own
yearning for home-time and comforts,
should raise such as I, egoist,
comes home lately, sailing the stretch
of a lifetime midway over.

Did his rising early. Oxford
taught a workman's son and schooling,
since it freed him, was his career.
He recently recalled his one
goal as pupil - get out of school.
My personal luck was a man
to sire me who held fatherhood
the chief of gifts, his vocation.

JOHN GIBBONS LONDON

THE BOY

Forgetting the sun in the pocket of his pants, he runs
and runs, forgetting the memory on his mother's lap,
he continues to run - and all seems changed..

All seems to have changed and the rain has lost its name,
the birds have lost each other – what is left in the drawers
of our country but pieces of words and faded pictures..

Pictures, distance distancing itself from the cries of a boy,
a boy with hollow eyes and a smile which has left him,
singing a song using the words he knows...

Knows that pain is everywhere on this land, even in the mint
leaves
we use to make tea and remember ourselves, remember our
faces,
our days in a country imprisoned in one season...

A season which limps, its shoulder carrying history and a tear..
The boy stops the running man asks, "Why are you running?"
The man answers, "To catch what I still remember."

NATHALIE HANDAL SOUTH KENSINGTON