

BlazeVOX 11

Spring 2011

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Distance

Out of reach, I saw the train begin to move
Gently down the station, tearing me from you
I tried to keep up with it while it was slow
And running nowhere, desperate, I chased your window.
By the platforms end your face was out of view.

And that was it. Not knowing what I should do
I waited a bit, little else to pursue.
When alone, life can seem a meaningless throw
Of static dice, when what you want, you know
To be out of reach

Like a broken compass hope has little use
Its same sad circles each departure will renew.
Instead choose distance, nothingness that shows
Only what is absent, unforgotten and known
If out of reach.

The Laing Art Gallery

Once they're outside - and I'm sure that they've gone;
I languidly traverse the vacant room.
An empty gallery, all wood and stone
Dusty, odd smelling; like a grave exhumed.
The paintings, yellowy and nicotine-
Seem to frown, oldish faces, looking on
As I clap heels together, rhythmic, tense
Idly passing canvas, landscapes; unseen
Pausing to lean, against the sign: 'Silence'

'Now then Charlie' I call out with a smile,
Slapping the back of some marbled toads head
laughing at this junk, half hidden, filed-
left in a backroom, not canvas but threads
"You're facing the wrong way mate, exits there"
I laugh again, sigh, then pausing awhile. I
Look a bit closer, at some of this stuff
With an unstated challenge in my stare
And caress the plaque, reading that this 'bust -

Is Thomas Berwick: Eighteen Twenty Eight.'
A stern looking man, stone eyed, alone
In a dark back room, with a dust covered plate
I pull up a chair giving a plastic groan
"Bust? Aye, well I'm broke too - that's why I'm in here"
I say to myself, now somehow sedate.
In spite of myself, come cold thoughts of peace,
"To be forgotten? Or to disappear?"
Leaving behind a pebble; gallery leased.

Ozymandius himself I think must -
Have known what little there is when you die;
Memories and monuments will fade or will rust.
But what if Tom you were just another guy?
Am I sorry, that this is what's left of you?
Well at least you got flowers with your dust
And the odd visitor to where you lie,
Still I feel so guilty, living life and youth

Unhooking the velvet divide I reach -
Forward to polish the brass of his name.
Awkwardly intimate, no life, or speech;
No love beyond an impulse brought by shame.
Frittering my time since the pub was closed
I came here idly, past framed sea and beach
Forgetting in some ways this is a tomb
Turning I walk, something awkward exposed
“Free Entry, Get stuffed I won’t come back soon”

Alzheimer's

When I'm coming home I lazily wonder,
why so many things seem to change;
Is it not just me getting greyer, older?

Age follows me through the streets I wander-
and I don't know where I am, it's strange.
Unfamiliar homes I pause and wonder

Where is that echoing of asphalt thunder?
Places I loved, the park, the grange?
Memories a nuisance as you get older...

Weighing you down with the shopping bags shouldered,
the ready meals for one (paid for with change),
the heavy anorak, now things are colder.

Nostalgia, is no good when you're under-
The weather, street names and people seem estranged
You get so caught up, in a world that's over. Older-

Stuff doesn't belong here, it wanders
Past the newly fenced off grange
"Is this my home?" now I wonder,
Getting greyer, getting older.

Crowds

It seems to happen everywhere;
getting swallowed up by the crowd.
In the station or by the square,
those terrifying, anxious clouds -

Getting swallowed up by the crowd;
Is a jostling strange sensation.
Those terrifying, anxious clouds -
they echo at every station.

That jostling brings strange sensations,
half seasonal every spring.
Echoing at every station,
loneliness is a strange old thing.

Half seasonal every spring,
in the station or by the square
loneliness is a strange old thing,
It seems to happen everywhere.

Teesside

Cooling towers gargle a napalm skyline
to lighter flint scorch: a lone scintilla.
This is the madness of creation,
The sparked ignition, aglow;
The flare stacks roar of hydrogen elation
The towering, flame: Illumination.