

After the Funeral

Stop all the clocks, cut of the telephone
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone
Silence the pianos and with a muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come

Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead
Scribbling on the sky the message He Is Dead
Put crêpe bows round the white necks of the public doves
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves

She was my North, my South, my East and West
My working week and my Sunday rest
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song
I thought that love would last forever: I was wrong

The stars are not wanted now, put out every one;
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood
For nothing now can ever come to any good

WH Auden

After the funeral, mule praises, brays,
Windshake of sailshaped ears, muffle-toed tap
Tap happily of one peg in the thick
Grave's foot, blinds down the lids, the teeth in black,
The spittled eyes, the salt ponds in the sleeves,
Morning smack of the spade that wakes up sleep,
Shakes a desolate boy who slits his throat
In the dark of the coffin and sheds dry leaves,
That breaks one bone to light with a judgment clout'
After the feast of tear-stuffed time and thistles
In a room with a stuffed fox and a stale fern,
I stand, for this memorial's sake, alone
In the snivelling hours with dead, humped Ann
Whose hodded, fountain heart once fell in puddles
Round the parched worlds of Wales and drowned each sun
(Though this for her is a monstrous image blindly
Magnified out of praise; her death was a still drop;
She would not have me sinking in the holy
Flood of her heart's fame; she would lie dumb and deep
And need no druid of her broken body).
But I, Ann's bard on a raised hearth, call all
The seas to service that her wood-tongued virtue
Babble like a bellbuoy over the hymning heads,
Bow down the walls of the ferned and foxy woods
That her love sing and swing through a brown chapel,
Bless her bent spirit with four, crossing birds.
Her flesh was meek as milk, but this skyward statue
With the wild breast and blessed and giant skull
Is carved from her in a room with a wet window
In a fiercely mourning house in a crooked year.
I know her scrubbed and sour humble hands
Lie with religion in their cramp, her threadbare
Whisper in a damp word, her wits drilled hollow,
Her fist of a face died clenched on a round pain;
And sculptured Ann is seventy years of stone.
These cloud-sopped, marble hands, this monumental
Argument of the hewn voice, gesture and psalm
Storm me forever over her grave until
The stuffed lung of the fox twitch and cry Love
And the strutting fern lay seeds on the black sill.

Dylan Thomas

It happens in slow motion.
The bus turns,
The taxi swerves,
The biker dies,
The timber lorry stalls.
I see the planks lose their settled berth
And a guillotine of ash moves towards my neck.
I try to dodge, but it takes my chest.

Firemen fight to cut me free, but still aware,
I see only their blood red tender.
Sparks fly, an ocean of steel tears.
And while the heat and light are at their peak,
My world goes dark.

And so, I awake.
My senses are dead.
The air is not my own.
I cannot feel or move.
In the distance I hear whispered tears
And saddened voices cry "Mercy".

And suddenly,
I feel.
I am whole, I am here, I am alive.
I realise the satin by my hands,
Cloth meets my face.
Hushed in the distance, there are words of ashes
Then suddenly, I know the rain of soil.

And so, I lie.
Swaddled in silk and bound by oak
A dreamer in a field of dreams
Entombed within a field of tombs

I cry and I cry
But my voice has been stolen.
I am bound, caged and strong-boxed.
Being, while I am un-been.
And then, there is nothing more.

But my cask is not alone,
Many crypts gather here.
And from some of them,
Come screams.

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