

## *Two Face*

*Some Poems by DW Myatt  
1974-1979*



## **Africa Recalled**

Where, among these books that breed like flies  
Are bred from a carcass in the bush,  
Are the meanings which once girded our lives  
And led us like supplicants  
To the slaughter?  
There was a special meaning, there  
While bullets parted our desire  
From our death

And the torrid sun lay breathing  
Between the hills of mist.

It is forgotten, like the natives soon  
Forgot why we the forgotten fought  
Amid the mud with the flies of heat sucking  
Our blood of life.

Memory, like money, fades:  
Each beauty becomes dulled  
Without the fulfilment  
That our projected image promises  
But never brings:  
And our women will forever weep.

Once, words spoke but now  
They speak no more  
Since what was treasured is profaned  
Through the profanity of use  
Just as in action without thought  
The wordless meaning fulfilled  
And we who remained were glad  
When each morning brought the news  
From our body to our brains:  
We are alive, still, thanks  
To our gods...

How could we, as civilians, re-adjust?  
Was there a meaning in clouds,  
In waiting because such waiting reminds?  
But there is truth in desiring desire  
Which we ourselves may not  
Yet always should strive to fulfil  
Through the actions which endanger life  
Since we have only to release our hidden self  
To become that being-beyond  
Which all great striving  
Brings.

But  
Every warrior desire breeds  
Another death  
While every quiet and dreary peace fulfils

From its beginnings  
The sulking coward who lies in wait  
Within.

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## Love

It is difficult, this understanding  
Of my love:  
I have to rise every morning  
With the intention of our future  
Moulded as some sculptors mould  
Their souls around a form  
That Will soon powers to a shape  
In Time.

It is difficult, this sharing  
Of each dream that makes her to journey  
To the joining of our selves  
And spills desire the way some music  
Spills some notes to form the suggestion  
Of some god:

There is no journey bribed by dread  
No sea that sets the horizon  
As the yearning of the dead sets  
The seal to future Time;  
There is no calling and no called:  
No passing and no one passed  
Since there is no you or I to understand  
The laked reflexion of each moon.

But I forget, and need to remember  
At each new beginning of each new  
Dream which is the beginning of our  
Love.

There are no words needed  
As there are no excuses  
For the failures of some Art:  
It is difficult, this speaking  
Of my love.

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### **The Two Faces**

I am the two faces of God -  
Vox Patris Caelestis -  
Within, within, a lewd Satan grins  
Playing at Change:  
My pieces are human who cried  
At my hurt.

I am alone, the cry  
While Treble voices sing  
Echoing, and strange shadows long dead  
Dance too briefly along the cloister wall.  
There is pain as I stare  
Past dying sun and a valley  
Winter cold  
Trying to believe while stars break  
And a crescent moon  
Glowing like the whore's eyes  
In that dark room  
Jibbers over the heavy breasts  
Of the hill:  
No cloud  
To veil her shame.

No one, nothing  
Answers. Only  
Air, and I sit, still waiting  
And remembering prayer.  
In the ruins, my dead self comes to life

Rising slowly, worm-slowly  
To the first singing blackness  
Of night.

No answers, nothing:  
Only this tramp sheltering  
In the ruins of a church -  
And memories, yes there are memories  
Glowing  
Like the lies of my life

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### **In The Valley**

In the valley each rock  
Is reduced by rain -  
It runs, as small stones  
Which will be soil  
As I and all that I carry  
Will be dead.

Was this valley a hill  
Before water weathered  
And each sheep trail was worn  
Between fern and heather  
And steep fern?  
There are no people, today,  
No noise lying like the dead crow  
Wormed:

But there are gods,  
If one knows where to look  
And can tread the steep slopes  
Of this hill.

Every road intrudes  
Upon slow thinking rock.  
Who tastes the silence that lies  
As each Summer's green  
Upon the broken rocks of rain?

Here, near Narnell's Rock  
Where Thor's hammer struck  
Many a startled tree  
And where dead men lie like seeds  
Waiting,  
Is neither day nor sun  
Rain nor rock -  
There is only the essence that exists  
Because essence must:

There are no answers  
Because no questions can exist -  
Just as I am the rock which is me.

Yet there are gods, still,  
If one knows where to look  
And can climb the steep slopes  
Of this hill

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## Letter

It is raining  
And I am watered  
And cold:  
There is warmth in love  
Which explains my wait  
By this road while cars pass  
Noisy in the shielding dark:

My spirit is not seen as it sits  
On the wooden bench where hill  
Meets valley sky  
And where a standing stone waits  
To whisper words  
Of a language that has died.  
But I listen, while rain falls,  
Hearing your cry.

Always a dream or a memory  
Lead us on  
And we wait like children  
Trusting in the spirits of the Earth.  
We love unsuspecting  
While they our lovers scheme,  
Succour themselves on our blood  
And bleed us dry

There is a sun as we sit  
In the heat of a summer  
On this bench as new lovers  
Holding hands -  
Transmuting all the dark days  
The tears of our past  
In the touch that mingles our auras  
As they must be mingled to bring  
The words of our waiting stone  
Alive:

Always this dream  
Leads me on.

But it is raining  
And in the rain I hear  
Your spirit cry

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## Only Relate

There is a simplicity in love  
To help solve those difficult equations we impose  
Upon our own problems of life:

There is nothing complicated about joy -  
It is only an appreciation which takes us far beyond  
The beginnings of our self  
When we who still desired strove mightily  
Against all other desires and our own.

Had we stopped, sat even, for moments, still,  
We might have seen the clouds  
Shape-changed by wind  
As they passed above  
There where even our street-hardened desire  
Could not go.

But we had to fight to prosper to live  
And only in passion did we glimpse in moments a beauty  
Beyond -  
As when, satiated within our lover's arms,  
Our being relaxed to journey in defiance of our life  
To where some gods were born  
While rain played as rain played upon those panes of glass  
And a Church clock tolled its ten amid the morning city noise  
In her Apartment  
When we who waited warm in bed should long ago  
Have been upon our way to work.

All religions were born from such answers  
Before we lost the Vision in the words:  
Each day we need to try to remember the questions  
That presenced such beauty  
Perhaps once only  
Upon our treasured space on Earth:

But can just one poem give just one killer  
Waiting  
Just one vision of the numinous reality of life?

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### **In Memoriam, Office Life**

Red skirt below black blouse she passes  
With her smile

*Contact Hospital Urgent  
Daughter Seriously Ill*

Recalling memories from a warm Spring  
Night  
When once I loved:  
What is this within my hand?

*Regret Inform You  
Daughter Died Today.*

File as Form P158  
As drains my office day  
Toward death

"Five Duty lapsed"

Spreading no rumours  
Of doom.

What has one left  
Save the urgent ululations  
Of dreams that once  
On a hot summer's day  
In a country far distant  
Sent a youth rushing into arms  
Where innocence was taken

Like this woman - whose black blouse  
Hides beautiful breasts -  
Takes these Forms that are only forms  
Bereft of life.

What has one but the ways  
That once were learned  
When I learnt how bullets  
Turned a body and how some women  
Bore within their clothes burning  
Hearts

"Calculator, please"

What have I left save the passing passion  
Moment that soon will pass toward a future  
Full of regret unlike that day now distant  
When Spring leapt into my life  
Stirring tears in a man too full to dream  
Amid a city sun and body sweat  
That held no promise but my own.

What have I left  
Save the silent spinnings of Destiny  
Gold beneath gods  
That once others followed  
In a country far distant  
As Degueudre bled tears before Jeanpierre  
While a world scorned all rumours of doom.

But, returning, my lover smiles  
And sighs, softly:  
"Where shall we go tonight?"  
While red below black, beads bounce  
Upon her breasts  
And her shapely shadow touches mine  
Recalling dreams from our damp  
Dependable night.

What is this now within my hand?

Regret to inform you, I resign

For I'm the damned  
Bound for another land

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