

## So Time and Wine

I should get back,  
but watch the train depart.  
Why do I need this city,  
memories perhaps?  
For once I'm holding bread  
to cast upon the waters,  
welcoming an urge to sip luxury.  
And there it is,  
on the shabby streets' periphery;  
a small hotel, select—  
and out of place, out of time.

A wine promotion in the bar:  
my luck holds, the wine is cheap.  
And there we meet,  
my accent draws her ear,  
and then her stare.  
She lowers standards,  
engaging me in chat:  
"those ghastly miners",  
(is every miner Welsh?)

A recent Catholic convert,  
startlingly voluble,  
projecting clear pictures  
of her frantic social round:  
bilingual, of course—  
*l'Anglais et le Francais.*

"Everything ordained".  
By whom, by what? Who or what ordained  
the crossing of our paths' instant antipathy?  
Ah, you of nurtured life,  
you blame me and my ilk for looming change,  
then cut at my desertion of the faith:  
could I not see — this gem could be repolished?

I've heard it all before.

“O ye of little faith”.

But why this grasping at the creed I've shed?  
What are you buying now,  
do you wear this new found succour  
like exclusive *haute couture*?  
can you hide from life  
by shuffling Gods?

Yet, we linger on,  
and through grape-mellowing  
hours, slowly soften,  
seek excuses for the other's madness,  
and look each other oddly in the eye.

Will we lay the class war's bedlam  
at the dancing feet of lust?  
Has time and wine liquefied  
the variance in our pride?

“ere the cock crows thrice”.  
Could I place fifteen shekels on the table . . . ?

Cowed by your nakedness,  
reservation stumbles through the door,  
leaving us to savour  
the peace of touching.  
Words a soft encroachment -  
you ask for meaning:  
let our few brief hours,  
leave meaning  
to the vine tendrils' grasp.

“And wine was made blood”.

Our senses flow  
free from love's brutalities,  
words stilled,  
mouths in ravenous feeding.

O, night made holy  
with pleasure's artless purity.

"Mary, mother of God,  
pray for us sinners now . . ."