

Poetry Series

Anthony Dalby
- poems -

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Anthony Dalby(26/5/1966)

Architect working near Lancaster. Love Lyndsay Clarke's novel *The Chymical Wedding* and the notion of seeing things out of the corner of your eye, not in the neon light

Become My Thirst

This longing
is as fine as porcelain
iridescent in the morning light.

Lover,
press it to your soft lips
and taste the nectar.
Become my thirst.

Anthony Dalby

Byzantium

And now I open wide poised and yawning stretch apart
To become the awning
Before you stands the entrance
To slip through and enter
The dark iridescence of glowing cloth
And fold upon fold enfolds your feet
And sit and sip the sherbet
And sound the bells and pipes
And pass through on and on and in to darker spaces
And vaults leap higher and higher into half known secrets
Curved rib stones

Byzantine form and taste and line
Forms glow in candled light and flicker in the half world light
Tigers eye and lapis lazuli and the bluest glass burning within its furthest depths
And so the wings unfold and lines with incense rise
And meld with opalescent forms

And here opens out a secret lair of books
Of vellum and leather of bronze clasps.
Openings begin and each leaf unfurls upon a new world
Pages turn and open wide and on and in till space upon space unfurls.
Wider and wider higher, each a release from the one before
Yet further deeper higher
And incense curves around your form and lifts you up and rests you down
To close your eyes to voyage further

Anthony Dalby

Colouring Existence

Sitting here, feeling the rain slide down my hair
Lunch apples lumped in my hand
Two pints of milk clinging to my clawed fingers
Now sheltering in the office fridge until coffee time
Hearing the backbird shine their song through the morning air

And everywhere the green light of growth
I have a need to share this with you
Every scent, sound, nuance
The sense of your presence with me

Friday sitting on a bench on the old railway line
I sensed you touch my cheek
With the back of your finger
A connection so intense
The colours around sang in joy
I gently fold the jewels of your being in my soul

You say be grateful for what we have
I can only do that
Sharing each day, each thought, each breath with you
I breathe in your incense
And send you enveloping light to brighten your day
Be blessed dear one

And then the oughts crowd back
Waves of oughts and shoulds and "what the hell have you been doing! "
And the soft song of the connection
Colouring the sounds of this existence
In emerald light

Anthony Dalby

Eiger Landscape

There is no flat here
no stillness
curves constant
lines gouged, lets say snow lines
and a light that sears spears and opens vast landscapes
as crisp and as sharp as our consciousness

How dangerous is this living
how it makes us scream
too clear, too white, too high too wide
yet we throw ourselves against it
stoning ourselves on its beauty

I wrap its whiteness round me
knowing I am inside you
wiggle in the hot muffled dampness sheltered from the numbing cold
curled round your log fire
listening to the storm outside

Then times occur
when the mountain is poised
held above the lamb clouds
stillness returns
and our vastness becomes manifest

Anthony Dalby

Every Day

I know you are there
every day
reading these lines
and I love you for that
I'd love you anyway
...but these things you know...

Anthony Dalby

For Neil...

Comforting snow sifts as flour at your tolling
soft feather down on iron clamped shut
sunlight touches the crystals
language drips from the icicles of your friends
their words flash in the winter light
fall to touch the hard iron below

Gorgeous lovers
strange moonflowers
as fine as fluted glass
carved chalk
his violet flowerbud lips cushioned against the varnished box
drip syrup against your maleness
fingers stroke imaginary thighs
to whisper profanities against your flesh

Delicious girls
touched by your innocent dreamings
reclining in the soft down of your memories
the safety and intimacy of your domain
opening in secret places
their dreams and wings
whispers and stockinged toes curling in your warmth

Father
held iron cold against his son
who dared open his soft lips to such a boy
stamped and ground out of his kingdom
uprooted as a weed
now grips the box and howls like a wolf
that his loins could hold such impotence
grinding dry dust knuckled against the hard walls
clamped in male iron
untouchable

Aunt
numb
that an angel so pure
could sin so well...

Creaks the snow melt creeps between the iron clamp stone soil
caresses the shell of the seed within

so begins the birth of the woman within the man

Anthony Dalby

Forest

Shrouded in this green carapace
Of parchment leaves
Drenched with the soaking of summer rains
Countless rivulets soaking into the crevices of the earth

The coupling

Opened thighs bleached naked on the emerald moss
Glowing porcelain in the half light
Entwined

Claws dig to scrape the dirt along his flanks
Forcing his way inside the female earth
Between the roots, the worms, the litter of eons
Secreted under the groin of the oaks roots
The fetid musk of feral homeliness

The she fox cries for her mate
The smell of damp air on pelt

The still soft sleep of rain falling down through translucent leaves

Anthony Dalby

Fragments

Tonight I shall turn into a seashell
Curving into its infinities
Silken smooth
Shining

Nestling
The sound
Of the sigh of the tide
Within its recesses

Tonight I shall walk on moonshine
Dappled across the cool orchard grass
And feel the black dew creeping up between my toes
And watch the light play in each drop

Anthony Dalby

Gouged Out

Now I am gouged out.
Silt slopped to the side
A ruin, safe only for owls.
Saplings reaching out from the harsh cracks
wreaked in my side.
The nightingale presses its chest against the
thorn until it splits and falls useless;
a feast for ants, for secret larvae.
As the rotten fruit falls to the ground
the seed is safe within.
An orchard of potential

Anthony Dalby

Hummingbird

sweet emerald jewel
hover next to my love's ear
and slide your probiscus down to her recesses
not to take her honey
but to trace jewels of sounds within
her chambers
place
echoes of ecstasies
half remembered dreams
on her pillow
When she awakes she will find them
and wonder
and dream again

Anthony Dalby

Irish Night In Sicily

Roll me over in the warmth of your tongue
weaving lives together in shimmering light
Grounded in hard rock
Visioning to infinity
and the lapping waves touching our flanks

Skim the surface touch the delight
sending out our ripples
ignorant that below
in the frightening depths choruses
the dark heat of the earth

We meet in the oil light
facing towards in the dance
arm linked until dawn
moving to the gulls' cries
piercing the darkness

Anthony Dalby

Leaping Salmon

I will not dream another's sweet musings
when the truth is only partly known
the fruit is so sweet but of another knowledge

but face my own full on
naked in the darkness
and recognise that which has never been shown before
and dream it as my own

I will not share you with another
I cannot
for their knowledge would lack the spice of experience

I am the silver salmon driving out of the peat black water into the
daylight
Rising rising
timeless and heavy
Falling backwards into the darkness

I am inside you rising up through the water feeling the water rush past
my
flanks
light flickers above
Searching for the head waters

They are there. I smell them
Peatiness all round

I hold your flanks
Pass my hands to your front, beneath your gills
fingers just apart
sensing your power running past my fingers
Silver water running through my fingers

Pass my hands down your sides
Sense the water passing over my skin
Surges rising up
geysers of water silver spume

The salmon rises

My beautiful salmon, you rise and explode gasping in the electric air
showers of jewels tremble in the sunlight
the sound of a thousand water falls

The pinky darkness of your open mouth
catching the irredescent droplets

Your flanks tremble in the sun

and fall

back into the enveloping water
bubbles rise
Dark fish sinks into the velvet darkness

Still Still Swish Still

Held like a chalice

Anthony Dalby

Let Them Be In Awe

Strap my back my arms and bind me
block my ears and blind me
but you will not touch the space inside
with your fearful hands

This is the white room, the dancing room
saved only for one to join me

Keep us apart, brand my tongue
and Chiron rises who healing with tears from his own scars
pouring them on the wounds of others
but knows there is no cure for his state

A dancing space where the light traces the loss on my heart
and carves out such pure space

They all seem so far now, beyond the dance,
watching with wonder, concern, love
not understanding the reasons or sensing the rhyme
from whence the life derives

Which cancels out fear
and thought for what is now and to come
the song which sings because it can
and transforms to gold where it touches

Only one crosses the void, always was, and is, and will be

Let them be in awe

Anthony Dalby

Lines On The Hand

The lines on
The hollow in my palm
Tell a story
of you
they curve round like hips
against the shore

of birds soaring in the half light
of the full moon
the roaring full moon
luminous blue
electric

of a look of recognition in a crowded room
a squeezed hand

of a wet eyelash
a tear brushed from your cheek
by my finger tip....

...tracing the lines
of your palm on mine

Anthony Dalby

Listen To The Stones

Still. In their beds
listen to their snoring masses pressing down
through shaft and head
and reaching high through untouchable void
to arc their fingers close to touch between the light

The shafts
they sing as transformed by coloured glass
splinter down the watery depths
and colour golden cheeks of ashlar
to touch deep red the curve in darker shadow

They wait to reach their Armageddon
the Prince's kiss
of dank wetness and fingers of rain tracing down their cracked veins
and lids prised open with knarled stubs of numb creepers
the split and tear and fall
down through the darkening light to crumble out
in dust and smut and stain
to join the Maker's clay

March 2006

Anthony Dalby

Morning Light

I woke this morning
and sensed the golden rose of dawn tracing through the air
mist threaded between the trees
a silent awakening felt around
A time of part awake, part asleep
when the energies are most touchable
and the veil shifts

Anam Cara is resting. until the sunlight
sears the mist and brings us to full wakefulness

Anthony Dalby

Morning Reverie With Four Swans

to look out and see
the rose light finger the horizon
and prise liquid shadows from the land,
turquoise sea taste the contours of your form

and sense the swans swim
in flight between the two
soft and still as golden dust
sifting in the silent light

to know them in the silken
shine falling to the kettle
the golden tones as the tea tastes
the hard white bite of the porcelain

then hold it to the inner earth
and feel the swim and grow and glide
burst and crack the crucible
and become the looking glass

and when they turn and stare
to catch the glimmer
the fire in the hearth
may they feel the kick inside

and know the sense is in your glance
the curl of the cocoon round your form
in the turn of your scapula
and the fingers touch

and see the veil shift....

Anthony Dalby

My Hand On Your Bare Thigh

My hand on your bare thigh
against the hard stone wall
pierced
hot sand slides under the sole of your feet
the silk slides
moist legs touch
fingers linger
the sandal strap digs across the palm
your hand
held down
silver bracelet
encircled by my fingers
restrained
the sand shifts round
taut fabric
I open you out
precious flower buds
for sipping bees
or wasps
licking the ripe fig fruit

Anthony Dalby

On The Tip Of Your Tongue

The tip
of your tongue
is hidden sweetness
in dark places
lying in soft crevices between silken sheets
veins of visceral potential
alliteration
words lying unspoken
wishes
half forgotten poems
dreams
yearnings and longings
possibilities
awesome fantasies
The swollen bud pushes out of its secret place
arching your lips to the light
to touch
the tip
of my tongue

Anthony Dalby

Otter's Cry

Cocooned in inky blackness
frost biting the brittle shell of the boat

my mind fingers its way through the sleeping stillness
to where you lie
woodsmoke drifts across the moonlight
and runs through your hair

crack!

awake sharp as needled teeth a scream in the night
dreams dispersed by the otter's cry....

my mind says otter
my heart says the cry of she who waits
my mad banshee who would devour me
a yellow spear of sound

of wild jewel eye who speaks
and the silent mewl of young and the flip flap flipper
of the silver stretch of fish

of holts hidden safe within the bowels of our mind
spun with golden threads of light
tail round haunch round claw round tooth round dream
nip and chase to join in the velvet darkness
with the oh my lovely moistness

I wrap my haunches round you and slide back to slumber
my silver seed seeping in your intimacies

Anthony Dalby

Ronchamp

Feel you in the clearing, this presence
in the butterfly climbing up your white flanks
and the silent bells
This is no building
this is a breathing presence
a bone rising from the secret ground
A relic from the maw the dark dull crack of war
of torn bodies and broken dreams
and what remains is silent whiteness
the bread and wine of holy spaces

Anthony Dalby

Siren's Song

You called me again last night, thick still pool on the moor
you called me by the mournful pipes and sickly yellow light drawn by your bow

By your neck thrown back, the rowan thrust back in the autumn wind
the sheep strands snagged in the brambles barbs
and the cracked dust of ewe bones
thrown against the velvet moss

Draw me back to all beginnings.
before the start.
the still thick black oil stillness
smothers the yearning from whence our journeys stem
slip o'er the rim, and trace the silver line, secret in the bog
and sound the words from in hidden chambers
run down your throat and chest and curve and slide
to draw your secret parts in sound through all the sweet air

Thus the Siren's song begins

This probably needs more explanation. This is derived from a Katherine Tickell concert I went to last Friday, and the extraordinary way she draws landscape through her music. In particular the music took me to a dark tarn in the Lake District which I sense is a fountainhead from where poetry stems, but defies being captured in words.

This is an attempt to capture part of it.....

Anthony Dalby

The Cyprus Stone And The Security Guard

The alarm sounds
The guard calls me over
Arms up, fingers probe me
His maleness disturbs me

He feels down
lets his fingers circle the stone
Explosives? detonator?
He frowns
I smile

I lift it out, the Cyprus Stone
Small, smooth, enigmatic
Tension fills the space between
Our eyes meet

He knows some secrets are best
Kept in silence
He waves me on
I pocket the stone again

Anthony Dalby

The Growing

I cried yesterday
tears of joy
as I felt you inside me
curled as a secret leaf bud

closer than ever before
joyous that even though we are so far apart
we share the same sunlight on our faces
hearing the woodpeckers drumming through the woods
and feeling the wind play with our hair

watching in wonder the purple fronds
of the larch tree cascade open pouring fruits into the spring breeze

I know, more than ever that my soul is your soul and will always be so

Anthony Dalby

The Sentinels

They are here
Sentinels
Still and straight as Celtic crosses
Plaid and inlay
Woven with visions within their tresses
Carved from the bleached carcass of driftwood tortured in the surf

Then gone-but not quite
Held as an echo in the moan in the wind
the trembling light on the headland
the lyric of the gull
the light in your eyes.....

Anthony Dalby

The Sounding

A shaft of light piercing the air
Cradled in a leaf's tremble
Sand cradling the foetus toes
And water arc light shimmer
broken into sparks
shatter on the light surface
oh my ears the drip dropp
the sound of colours not seen but heard
which ebb and bulb canter laugh and glitter

Settled I listen again
And there still the constant longing
Golden light
Syrups my heart
But cannot satisfy
The dull red ache for light flight
In emerald green
Though a mother's love
The doe's muscled tongue on her calf

And you Kate send the brown jug spinning in an endlessness
Of memory on and on and on
In orbit down on
to the floor
And in the eternity of tease touching the floor
the eternal shatter
shard moves from shard turn and curl
held in September light powdered in dust.....

The raw creep of the longing awakens
And I crouch weeping
For the lost child
Lost hearts souls earths deer seas
God-all you mired in the dirt cracked and burnt
Smashed and mired
Drowned and gouged out
held in the gulls hard beak

Break open my heart bird

And pour the words on the rocks. Let the language bleed
Glut in the cracks
vomit from the void inside
and the death that is the birthing from the maw

Let the sounding begin

Name them all; tongue their noise
each delicate flicker, for in their naming
Their fluttering hearts awake
And gossamer rises in the dew
And they are lighter and finer
And as slender as the thistledown
Held in the autumn light of the roaring moon
Swifts in flight
Shards arise

And you my peewit
Tumble with me in the dusk light
Half seen in the twining light of river mist
But heard full on the wheeling sear of your sounding
Tumble but do not touch
for the space between us is sacred...

Anthony Dalby

The Thistledown Cloak

I saw it still and silent in a case
poised
for take off
by the disabled toilet.

a coat, a cloak
no ordinary garment.
transparent gossamer
woven from thistle down

They had to put it in the case, they said
because you never know what could happen
Someone might wear it
grow wings
rise into the air
over the rooftops

They might
swim in raindrops
become infinite
transform the world

We can't have that

I will go there tonight
and wear it...

Are you coming?

Anthony Dalby

The Walk To Dunstanburgh

On the shore with you
rivulets lap the sand
bestir times before.
Birds wheel
the bone white brittle driftwood,
our feet crack the dry bladderwrack.
The swing of your hips
the waves against the shore.
Your eyes, pools cupped
into the hardness of the rocks
your dress flotsam as the tide rises
against your headland.
The surf traces a line against your flanks

Anthony Dalby

Ti Amo

ti amo
there is no more
thats it
simple pure
like a starched table cloth
under the crystal sunlight
a pinafore
a counterpane

summer rain on the crystal window
glass
that was sand
that was beach
that was ground in your infinite ocean

Anthony Dalby