

Poetry Series

Ian Keenan
- poems -

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Ian Keenan()

A Letter

A month now since you wrote,
And every day but Sunday
Swings upon the letterbox.

The chilled, smoked evenings of Autumn
Bury hands in pockets,
And hunched backs
Head their ways.

The Bingo Hall lights
Hours spent, dead matches,
On red pages ripped
From the Book of Hope,
Rising to the lamp bulbs
Tinged in rainbows
Without end.

My thoughts revolve
About you,
Scanning your face,
Your eyes, your cheek, your chin,
Your cheek, your eyes,
Your cheek, your chin.

The day comes round,
The night has lost its way,
Sliding into corners, gutters,
Under beds,
Beneath lids,
Waiting, leaning sharp
Bone Shoulders into
Eyes

Staring for a slit
of sunshine.

Ian Keenan

A Walk

Winter turns leaves swish
Like corn flakes kicked around,
Frosted paths moistened by the snow.
Straight stark trees,
Light broken by a hand
Upon my face.

A hill -
Below the feet
The never sleeping growth;
Breath hung on my shoulder,
Tugging at my sleeve.

Clouds leaning on the sun,
Big and bony winds
Assault the weak,
The mouths of warrens choke
With humus,
A white hand holds.

The dog barks,
Squirrels run,
A train throws back
The shouts of children;
Your small hand warms
Beneath my shirt.

Ian Keenan

Accrington Stanley

Parking by the pub,
We walked the grass into the pitch,
Sitting far from our numbered seats
In positions you viewed much better.

The lads were as usual screaming
Through the match,
But you too down
To join them,

Watching quietly
While we were winning,
Then drawing,
Then lost 2-1.

But analysis while driving home
Was not The yellows or Stanley,
But her,
And how you still saw chance.

My heart bled,
Your inconsolation
My tears,
but nevertheless and in spite the facts,
You hoped.

Ah, my son,
I do so wish,
But also pray
That you in time
Will sew the wound
And meet someone more worthy.

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Ian Keenan

After Hours

While they talk
I drink, □
Thinking of you few□
Who have kept a place
Should I call, □
Who fear as I do
The coming of dawn□
Cold and alone.□
□
And in particular□
You - who that afternoon□
Stood excited at my door, □
Shaking the web of my dream; □
Who made love such as to□
Put a smile to suffering,
And whom time swept away□
Too soon.□
□
Now, in the ash of evening,
With dawn shuffling at my back,
My solitary ache is for you,
The wind stirring dust
In a dead fire,
Burning.

Ian Keenan

Alone

There are many of us,
Each in a cage,
Clutching on a single thread,
Snatching at the
Circling hour,
Spun without direction.

You do not know how the
Thought can be blood
In one,
Bleached in two,
And in three be
Dust and puffed away
In a dreadful doubt,
Flattening the world,
With a slapping fear
In a taut and stuck-dry
Brain.

The sparrows flit and
Bare their backs
To a fruitless sun,
And fall from roof to road,
Kicking into death
A frightful pose.

Ian Keenan

An Alien World

Hunched, hesitant,
She peers into an old diary,
Making copious notes.

Plates rattle in the kitchen.

She calls her to sit down,
Coughing,
Perhaps not long.

My tea's grown cold.

She calls again,
And her grandchild
Comes,
Smiling,

Ready to help the old lady
With Windows and an alien
World.

Ian Keenan

Another Day

The centre is lost
as I stand,
ordering coffee in the buffet bar,
uncertain about my uncertainty;
flu? , interrupted sleep? ,
underlying anxiety?

Reading Town looks at me,
all glass and Aztec,
the grey cygnets at
Tilehurst
squalling in rings.

Oracle, Regus, Druid,
J D Edwards,
ICL Retail and Microsoft,
all faceless sandstone.

I journey half
hearted to a meeting
off the Edgware Road.
Perhaps Andrew will
enliven me,

Perhaps the green and blood
brown of these endangered
fields, invaded by the Brookside
of Didcot, will stir me.

My coffee reassures,
while the Aussie in purple
flicks my Guardian,
shyly returning my
smile.

Ian Keenan

At Night

Since my day began
I have been searching for the gold
hidden in the chinks
between rocks.

I have been digging
in many places
and ways,
but at the slightest touch
the rocks shift
and my sight is blocked;
my hands are bloody,
and my day is old,
its strength ebbing in the shadows.

At night dreams
drop and lift me,
making and breaking up
the crowds
of which I have dreamt
so many times,
of men and women
and their small affections.

Ian Keenan

At Noon

Sat here looking at
A china cockerel
And a Cardiff postcard -
Fifteenth of August, nineteen sixty.

It's cold in this loft,
My mind picking at
Thoughts of my family,
Work, and money,
Grains that hope like demented frogs.

And soon the clock will strike
And joy will sit with boredom,
And we will eat -
At noon.

Ian Keenan

Bed Early

Bed early this evening,
Saturday,
Wife at a sick friend's,
Kids in London.

I see around me photos
And memorabilia,
Constant reminders
Of where I've been
And why.

Her friend is dying of cancer,
Appreciation now embedded
In my blood,
Of what I have
I need to cherish,
Before my time
Arrives.

Ian Keenan

Blood Red

Vapour trails,
Pink,
More than the
Blue and white of
Skinny clouds;

On flights to who-knows-where,
From Birmingham and
Gatwick.

My heart beats,
Blood red,
Greater than the
Black of death,

Thankful I live.

Ian Keenan

Calm The Madness

Back from the school run,
And now her son,
His hundredth text,
His girl no longer loves him.

What's to be said
To still his grief
And thoughts of death.

But gradually
She brings him to,
Until there's sight of other things
To calm the madness.

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Ian Keenan

Christine

Lost in a moment
Summers ago;
White blouse
Down at breast,
Streaming hair
Black even on arms;
Hay dust kicked in rainbows,
Breaking straws beneath
Her back;
Her love pink and
Satin black,
Unsullied,
Unopened in the sun,
The memory never broken

Ian Keenan

Crossroad

Your time spent,
Intentions at the
Breaker's yard,
The vagrant hand of retribution
Picking.

This was your staff,
Broken,
This your bible,
Ashes,
Your ways twisted,
You sit,
Dispossessed.

In crowded rooms among the smoke
The colours move and fade;
Behind her head
All bunting at the
Closing hour;

And you proclaimed solutions
Numberless of torments
Seen in eyes;
The devils
Exorcised by fiery tongue,
And blood felt incantations
Tore confessions from their
Parted lips;
And consummation made a
God of you.

Days drifting by
On days,
What choice between
Prophet and ragman?
Between the hills
That come and go in dreams,
And life and death that
Balance in the valley?

Ian Keenan

Dark Rooks

Wing, wing, dark rooks,
Slow climbing the pigeon pair,
Preening in the bare, beech tree,
Scudding the winter's thin clouds
Northward.

Whence, whence, far rooks,
The silent call? ,
High, so very high the skyline's
Craggy spire;
You cannot know,
Flying your only knowing.

What, what, vast wind,
Draws them to your dawn? ,
Specks now no bigger
Than the eyes of spawn.

He turned to look,
Not seeing,
Alive, but dead,
Heart pumping, barely breathing,
Something having gone elsewhere

With the far, dark rooks
Winging the vast wind,
Northward.

Ian Keenan

Directions

I have directions□
Numberless, □
Every stone on every□
Road predicted,
No turns, □
No turning back.□
□
The hedgerows and the land beyond□
lack consequence, □
And thereafter□
Offer no□
Distraction.□
□
Neither the end, □
Nor the way, □
Nor the reasons are distorted,
for each, in every way, □
Is the same.□
□
I, in this box, □
Await with patient□
Aimlessness□
The dull heat ashes
Of my end.

Ian Keenan

Do You Think?

And what of the others? ,
What will they say? ,
That I was never
Good enough? ,
Too old, or poor,
Too shouty or
Submissive?

But as I see the pigeons
On the rooves
Fight or flutter,
Is this, I muse,
What life must be?

So do you think me
Small and ineffective? ,
Do you snarl inside
At what I do not do?

I can go on just
Loving you,
But what then of
The blood upon the carpet,
The death throes of
My shattered soul?

Ian Keenan

Elaine

The Hawveys lived over the lane,
Their garden and ours
In line.

I liked Elaine,
She was needy
And had big tits.

But we never kissed,
Too well protected
By her dad.

So we looked out of our
Bedroom windows, waving

As we sailed into the distance
Of time and
Circumstance.

Ian Keenan

Failure

I could not speak, □
Your face□
A small child's□
In the death of anguish; □
Heaving tears and staring□
Into oblivion, □
Twisting fingers□
To every distracting device, □
Burying your dead□
In clutches.□
□
Abject at your choking□
Desolation□
I withdrew, □
Trapped,
Watching to be seen again,
Waiting for your return,
Intentions
Sticking
In my throat,
Your rawness
Echoing
My abuse.

Ian Keenan

For My Self

I have always worked,
but enjoyed it best
when working for myself.

A name, small reputation,
freedom -
to see my kids to school
and back,
and live through them
the years I never had.

Ian Keenan

Full Of Their Love

I have made the phone calls,
Trusting the work will come
In time for me to pay my way.

It's been like this for so long,
Being a consultant
Not an easy option.

But then how can I complain,
So much time to see and be
With my kids,
Their schools and matches,
Playgrounds and friends.

Such a privilege –
Maybe poor but when I go
I'll go floating on such mem'ries.

Ian Keenan

Garfunkle's

KFC was tempting,
but my gallbladder complained
so I settled for Garfunkle's
and an omelette.

I'm not lonely,
planning the wait
for her passport,
but it takes me back.

I once had to renew
in a hurry –
some business trip,
the process the same
but you to come with me.

This time, as for so long now,
you to go without me.

I'm not lonely,
Victoria Station busy,
but I miss those times
when we once loved,
innocent,
no tears nor tearing.

Ian Keenan

Geordie Girl

George, George and David were the top
In my first job,
A chemist in the lab
To make more of
Our Daz and Fairy Snow.

Yet even then those Geordie girls
Were after me,
And down the pub
When slightly pissed they'd
Touch my thigh or more.

Work, booze and sex
Were all the thing,
Yet in my bedsit late at night
I'd write another me,

Where love was all
And loneliness a sacrifice
Worth much, much more
Than pumping laundry powder.

Ian Keenan

Glen Girl

It was a long walk from
Home to the Glen,
The park and across the river
At Cumberland Basin bridge,
The road towards Avonmouth
And up the steps the Downs.

But it was worth it,
The noise and dance,
The girls and chances
Of a kiss,
Then home again.

I once took one
To her flat,
But as I was at it
A stone thrown at her window,
And brother Roger calling.

He and I walked home,
Drunk and gabby,
But I've not forgotten
My Glen girl,
Never seen again.

Ian Keenan

Green

Elvis is the clock face
by my bed,
near the leaf glazed and sculpted
by my son's
making years ago.

I love green,
old statuettes looking somewhat Dutch and droll,
like my parents,

and the green pepper shaker and
hair brush relics
of my first home,

bits of families,
joined only by memory
and my heart's yearning.

Ian Keenan

Halloween

I see bits of pumpkin
orange on the wooden floor,
the knife still wet with juice,
a small sock fallen half-way
down muddy stairs.

The night claws in,
the cat a sleeping smudge,
the rabbit haunting its dank hutch.

I eat toast,
staring at old photographs,
ears crackling for the shrieks
of my two black-faced,
fang-toothed sons,
the tricks and treats of my existence.

Ian Keenan

Hancock's Woods

I was eight and running,
Monsters yelling from
Bushes,
Slipping on wet leaves,
Even my sister scared.

Out of Hancock's,
Past the stream and on
The field-side track
Leading to the arches
And home.

We stopped, a blackberry bush
Too tempting,
Wondering where our brother
Roger was,
Not worried.

And as we turned the style
He came,
Laughing, calling names,
The chatter of a
Haunted House.

I can still hear him,
Late at night,
Outside my bedroom window,
Wondering if he'd really changed
In sixty years.

Ian Keenan

He Knows

Sitting in the cafe
You'd never guess,
While he goes on about
The kids and caravans,

But also knows,
Not counting the days exactly
But a short-list of must-do's
And people to see.

Out of the blue I think,
The cancer,
Here, then there,
Then everywhere.

Greedy for life
Quite rightly,
The family,
And things to do
He's never got round to,
Like a motorbike,
And Scotland to see.

And when he goes
He knows we'll be there,
Laughing and crying,
A beer,
A boat,
And a song.

Ian Keenan

His Postman

He liked me, my boss,
As looks counted
In those days,
And I was handsome then.

But I was fairly
Messed up,
Emotionally dead,
My sociable persona
Carrying the day.

So good old Gavin,
Down in Kent,
Smoking like a chimney,
Wanted just the good news,
So I became his postman,

My smile-a-day
Keeping his woes
At bay.

Ian Keenan

Holding Your Hand

Last night I dreamt I
heard your voice,
and turned to see you
at the door,
but woke too soon.

I love to hold your hand in mine,
to keep you safe,
to keep you close,
and chatting we find things to say
to make the world
as we see fit.

Thank you, dear Grace,
my cake-maker,
the candle lighting up my day,
I love you so
and you love me,
and not even the cats
shall come between.

Ian Keenan

I Want To

I want to say I love you
even though I don't,
I want to kiss your breast
and lick your neck
and laugh my head off
and tickle your feet in bed;

I want to hold you
when you cry;

I want to die,
even though I don't.

Ian Keenan

In This Dream

Had this dream not caught me up
I would have been so different,
my hair longer,
my jeans ragged at the ends,
and I would have smelt
of marijuana and slightly stale.

My buttons would have been
red and green,
my satchel yellow,
and my women gypsy-like
with unshaven arm-pits
and leather-thonged bracelets.

But now in this dream
I sit here in bed
besides a cold cup of tea,
earphones to stop the music's noise
disturbing the dust on my black shoes,

and put my earplugs in
sliding beneath my duvet
quietly,
my blue suit and brown chinos
waiting to greet me in the morning.

Ian Keenan

It Is September

You, who have seen the
White and redness
Of that hour,
Who set the circle
And primed the bud,
When sensibilities
Felt gifts ridiculous
So great the gap;
You could not know.

Though insidious her coldness,
Enchantment turning
Tinsel,
The silence chilled by
Silent disbelief,
For the most part
No great thing,
Your losses were your challenge.

But ash, now,
Numbs the fire,
Your innocence all alabaster,
The circle cracked and
Dead the bud;
Your pathos is
Your own offence;
Unfrocked,
Your confidence corrupt,
You pass your time,
Wilted,
Waiting.

Ian Keenan

Jimmy Hill

I have cleaned the house;
They are in London still;
I wait for Dr Martin.

And Jimmy Hill is dead,
87 and battled with
Alzheimer's for seven long years.

I enjoyed his voice and drawn face;
His passion for footie.

His family argued as to
Where he should stay,
His third wife
Had the say
Over the kids - five in all.

May Jimmy go
Where all good commentators
Go,
A permanent seat in the stands
Of football Heaven.

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Ian Keenan

Job's Worth

She hangs her clothes,
And everyday she fills her life
With walking dogs or
The endless wash.

Retired now;
Was a nurse but wanted out
As early as.

Her partner doesn't like his job,
Technician at some place nearby,
But feels he's safe,
So works -
Just for his pension;

Should be free from jail in
Fifteen years or so,
Poor soul.

Ian Keenan

Last Rites

In the thin-veined glimmer of his skin,
Grey-skeined like the rain's myriad
Tributaries part and join and switch silently
On the window's pane,
The torment of his slate green eyes,
Incapable of sound, cried,
His heart's spark a heatless gaze
Frosting in vacuity,
His bolt shot.

In this, his transformation to non-life,
I recall how frightened he'd been
In case he missed the grey, papier-mache pot
With his last pee,
As though his soul might similarly be soiled
In perpetuity.

Ian Keenan

Learning To Smile

I have done little
In my life;
Begot some children,
Earned a crust,
Loved and been loved.

But no fame there,
No word in print
Or patent,
Except perhaps
No.34222 for the synthetic fabric
I did invent
With dear John Stallard,
Long since gone
From Gargrave,

And some poems here and there.

My grandkids are in Ozland,
Skyped but rarely hugged,
My younger children
London,
More reachable.

And I, adrift, watching death -
Learning at least to smile.

Ian Keenan

Lights Will Guide Her Home.

After the summer break,
Back home while others work
Or meet their friends,
I, pathetic, stay
Watching Red Rock
Or the cat in the rain.

My only salvation our choir,
Practising 'Fix You',
Having seen Coldplay play
Once In Oxford.

'When you love someone, but it goes to waste
Could it be worse? ".

Not really,
But I've adjusted,
My boys in London
Whom I miss so much,
And lovely Gracie;
I not the father
But she forever mine,
Here.

She got B's in her GCSEs today,
And I was so happy for her,
She more naturally an actress
Than mechanic.

So proud,
But one day she will leave,
Then tears will surely come
Streaming down my face,
Yet hoping that lights will always
Guide her home many times
Before I go.

Love Lost

I hear the makers of thunder
Fly unseen,
Drumming rows of
Dumb houses
Stacked grey,
Shaking in the rain's evening.

Inside this gaudy room
I stir worn sentiments
Through an old
And battered speaker,
Pausing at times
At the distant noise
of others,
Swilling the evening's waste
from my cup.

The faces come
Vaguely,
Knowing I dream
Their smiles mock my
Distance,
And though I struggle
They do not forgive.

My past and future have
No continuity,
And I am afraid
In the night
In being of no
Importance
Until tomorrow.

Ian Keenan

Margaret

Somehow her mum
Looked Scottish,
A jutting lower lip
And beady blue eyes.

I saw her most days
When walking home from
School,
She waiting for her daughter,
Margaret.

We used to ride our bikes up the back lane,
Throwing stones
Down her garden path.

Now Margaret lives near Glasgow,
Close to the sons
That her mother would
Have loved
To tell off for swearing,

Before hugging them to sleep
With a kiss.

Ian Keenan

Mirage

My eyes should not hurt so,
but ungrateful sights attract
my love,
and send it running
to grasp at mists,
bring bubbles to collapse
and beauty to a climax.

But I do not reach
them,
so each day baffles,
nights unappointed
turn me over,
now to sometimes dread
stillness and opened eyes.

Ian Keenan

Missed You

I have not missed you
For so long,
There having been little point;
But as our days converge
To a point in sight,
As things move relative
Not to me or you
But more to us,
I begin at times to miss you.

And I know now why
I did not miss you before;
I did not want this
Desolation of
Time treading dreams to tears,
Leaving you and I
Barren stalks,
Shaking in the wind.

Ian Keenan

My Boys

I don't dislike them,
The tombstones round
The church,
Of Woolscombe, and Tebbit,
And Mrs Yeatman.

I knew a Mr Yeatman once,
Bank Manager,
Not easy to talk to,
Tight on overdrafts.

Money's tight right now,
But I saw my boys last night
In London,
A cheap Thai meal
And talk of ISIS.

They left for Brixton
And Brockley,
And I dreamed on the train
That I might die
If it weren't for them,

The heartbeats of my life.

Ian Keenan

Never Having Seen

It is often the thought,
caught between the dishes
and running upstairs,
the thought of something
missed,
not quite me.

But nothing ever happens,
and I return,
never knowing how to venture or
gain,
only having seen
some vestige in the shadows
of water.

Ian Keenan

Not Trust

Do not trust the sun;
It hides,
Scornful,
Or scorches and burns
To death.

Nor trust the snow and
Ice,
Frozen souls before
Our lids are closed.

Trust little,
Except your sons and daughters,
Whom you loved and
Lived for.

Ian Keenan

Of You

Asked to talk of you
I find little to say.
Not that you are perfect,
Grumbling as you do
Sometimes
For unknown reasons,
Fearing at times my capabilities,
At times questioning the worth
Of my endeavours.

But neither dead planets nor stars
Describe a Universe
And, being no Einstein,
I remain silent.

Ian Keenan

On Waking

I sit here
eating Pecan Plaits,
uploading some old party pics,
and feeling guilt.

Others rant at work,
or sweat between the Hoovering
of the house and chasing up the kids,
or wait to bring the washing
from the line.

I may be old,
my right knee giving me
too much gyp,
but wonder more and more
at my great fortune,
to feel life's miracle of warmth
we call the sun.

Ian Keenan

Our Meeting

Went today,
Excited,
But you forgot.

Peered through your
Windows,
Heart reflected in the
Glass.

Ghosts waved back,
Our meeting
Fading
As all mem'ries
Do.

Ian Keenan

Raynes Road

Not far from Bristol City's ground,
Where I only went once,
With Dad.

But Christine was the key,
Met through friends
At 7 Raynes Road.

Her father was a welder, on the docks
At Hotwells,
Managing somehow
To appear
Whenever we were at it.

Must have been the neighbours.

She lay among the corn
One summer day,
Dark hair on shoulders,
Large breasts hidden
Beneath her blouse.

We never did it,
But always almost,
Then I to Uni,

While she went off and
A banker wed.

Ian Keenan

Restless

Somewhere,
Underneath it all,
But I can't get there,
So here I sit,
Depressed.

Were I able
Then all would seem
Better,
Something bigger
And brighter
Than my moods
And concerns.

But I cannot,
However much I
Dig,
And though I feel
It stirring,
I cannot reach.

One day I will,
Then whatever
I will be free,
But until then
I sit,
Worrying about most things,
Restless for lightness
And flight.

Ian Keenan

Sam Smith

Just a walk, the sun in,
And back,
Old pics on the computer,
And Sam Smith.

The women, they didn't stay;
The first one oh so long ago
And evil,
Thank God she aborted.

But no real escape,
The second one as ruthless,
Two kids then threw me out;
Didn't want emotion,
Just a handyman called Tom.

And after
I married someone
So much younger,
Needy of a father figure -
Her mum said it would fail.

Lovely kids,
But as they grew,
So she grew
Colder,
Had a beautiful child
By the next door neighbour.

Sat here I sometimes wonder
What went wrong.
I'm a nice bloke I've been told,
And loving - perhaps shouted too much
At times, just like my father.

So now, in these days,
Left living to age
In my attic,
Listening to Sam Smith,

Hoping that his, at least, might
Stay with him.

Ian Keenan

Seeds Of Time

Your fires, how they brightly burned,
My father;
Timbered by the straining
Of your back,
Biking endlessly,
A martyr to the railway clock,
Lost in shifts but -
None-the-less - the maker of our toys,
The toffee-man,
The cobbler of our soles,
Too soon, too old,
And we too big to hold,
Waving in the mirror,
Small enough for tears.

Though your singing now has faded,
Not your laughter,
Ringing still about your children's
Children;
Pride of Sirehood in your eyes,
Our every small achievement
Cherished, paving now the way beneath
The arching triumph of your years.

And while at times you falter,
Mem'ry out of step with time or,
Walking, stepping falsely,
Never is your love a question
In our minds;
For God is in your heart,
However life or words have lied,
Your heart in God and actions,
Sweetly meant, misunderstandings
Now redundant,
You forever sown
Within the endless
Seeds of time.

Sitting Still

I rarely go with the flow,
always pushing,
impatient,
moving always into action.

But sitting here still,
as I have to,
then things arise,
words,
sadnesses,
appreciations.

Perhaps I rush to
close the trap,
keep the movement
of reflections' tide
at bay.

Yet the waves delight
as much as scare,
and I am washed
joyful,
all my loved ones with me.

Ian Keenan

Tears

Your mother was right
Of course,
'Too old' she said,
'It will end in tears.'

And has it,
Now two sons later,
But then a girl
Born to your 'out of wedlock'
Guy next door.

But I love her so,
Now fourteen,
Bright and kind and
Tantrums
That will pass.

So the tears are gone,
And in their place
We stuck together,
Raised a beauty
Who keeps me now
In different tears -
Of love.

Ian Keenan

Telemarketeer

They phone -
"Can I speak to Mr Keenarn? "
The accent of an Asian voice.
"I'm sorry, Mr Keenan
Is out".
I replace the phone.

What a job,
Hundreds of calls a day,
Ceaseless rebuttal,
But call they must,

For their children's sake,
And perhaps no father.

Ian Keenan

The Firing Line

He was always smoking,
Afraid of what our
High-up bosses might be thinking
Of our skills.

Ian, our HR, more humane
As should he be,
A family man
And asking after me.

His secretary too was after me,
But cancer was her tragedy
Poor woman,
Never to have lived
Before she died.

But Gavin taught me one big thing,
That sucking up to management
Detracted from the impact
Of our P&L performance,

For in the end they pushed him
To retire,
The firing line dressed up,
A pleasant leaving do
His only sop.

Ian Keenan

The Garage

A green door,
Just past the strawberries,
And inside
Dad's metal last
To mend our shoes.

Then he used to ride his bike
To Temple Meads and the
Telegraph Office,
Night or day,
Rain or sun,
His work shifts
All one.

In '53 he bought
The Minx,
What wonder -
No more trains
From Parson Street
To Bude.

Parked in the garage,
Now no need or room
To sole our shoes,
I grown up,
Remembering Dad of yesteryear
Among his tools.

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Ian Keenan

The Mourners

His death has flayed them, □
Crossed and weeping, □
Conclusions buried, □
Fingers flailing dust, □
Questions piled frantic.□
□
They walk sightless□
About the sun, □
And on their knees□
Exhausted -
Crack stones for water.□
□
They rest in the past□
On him that cannot rest; □
They do not think him□
Dead, □
Just that he barely touches them, □
His path not quite in line□
With theirs.

Ian Keenan

The Path

Mixed with leaves and woody detritus
The path leads, as ever,
Through the memories and yells of
Kids.

The Scout Hut, greenly bedraggled,
Outside
The remnants of last week's
Fires,
And in their kits my boys,
Ghosts earning still their
Stars.

Passing the bark and dead buds
I see them past,
Building dens of twigs and twisted
Boughs,
Laughing and running
Into my mind's distance.

Approaching home I know I shouldn't,
But how to stop my heart,
The pain always in the delight,
The price of age and fatherhood.

Ian Keenan

The Reading Group

Sitting at Dave's
We'd wonder who'd be
Next,
Eight of us;
A bit nervous.

Some read prose and others
Poetry,
Sometimes their own,
Waiting for feedback
Like life,
Anxious that our
Impact was poor,
Our language
Incomprehensible.

But here
They were kind,
Looking at the positives,
While we all,
Smiling,
Hid our truths
Til later.

Ian Keenan

The Stone

The stone I found was dirty,
On the path of my walk,
But something reminded me
Of older times,

Children searching fossils
Down the lane.

I always see them,
Playing in the trees,
Abandoned now
For lives in London.

But I hold the pebbles dear,
Embodiments of times past,
My sons -
And laughter.

Ian Keenan

This Month

In this month of flighty
Fluttering swallows above
Houses,
Of lugubrious jets
Settling in the skies
Above.

In this July
of my birthday,

Clouds roar and
Roads buzz,
Gears change and
Speed away,

Rowan trees grow in parts,
And ash dirties
My. window;
Tunes plague my ears,
And my light has been
Taken
By the dusk.

Ian Keenan

To A Friend In Winter

When the allotments
Called in February
From the back,
And a green day
Hung a breath
To air,
Then I thought of you,

Stretching Spring
Through a fair-haired
And smiling summer,
Of fishing rods and bottles
And a wet dog;
An Autumn slightly
Smoked and cardiganed
With your eyes;

A Christmas
Drunk merry to
Reeling around and
About each other
Down dark and
Laughter clattered
Lanes,
Back home, anywhere;
And then, you and I,
Separate,
In a February.

Ian Keenan

To A Young Lady

In this open heart□
Your cheek blushed - □
I breathed awkwardly; □
Dressed in lilac, □
Uncertain colour of your ways□□
Laughter broke out, □
Turning a sound joke stupid.□
Carved in wood of many□
Heads painted□
For gods and devils -□
Your good psychiatrist□
Twisting lemon peel□
In sugared water,
Cathartic tonic for the
Arthritic id,
You carp at life
But leave the hook
Unbaited.

Token of the mindless eye
of men,
Stone in my shoe,
Perhaps a rock in some
Man's soul;
Still born,
Yet to be born - or,
Born only when loving,
Dying

Ian Keenan

To And From

The bell breaks sleep;
Her body stirs
To send away goodnight,
And breaks my day.

I leave,
Her warmth beneath
My shirt ransacked
By the morning.

Along the cracks the
Day breaks,
Each piece worthless,
Scored in vain.

Push on home,
Litter on the from road
Left behind -
I go to a new night
Turning.

Ian Keenan

To Rachel

You cannot help yourself,
Can you,
Liking as you do the rules
Of living safe and tidy,

Keeping things in order,
Protecting both your little ones
And Dave.

And you cannot help the love
You give to others,
Your laughter and your holding
Those who cry.

And since I've know you
Oh so long ago,
When you in school
Cheered your friends
And family so,

Your signature has been
Of loving even foe,
And so I celebrate you,
Rachel,

Your birthday bringing cheers
And song for another loving year,
From one among the many
Who adore you.

Ian Keenan

Too Lazy

I must stop nibbling
At nuts and raisins,
Or texting my son about
Nothing,
Or wondering where
My Ollie is.

Half my life
I'm on my own,
Retired,
My wife out working.

So I write the odd poem,
Watch too much telly,
And chase the cat
From the sink.

Is this what things
Have come to? ,
I ready and able,
With no-one calling,
Perhaps too lazy
To live?

Ian Keenan

Visiting The Office

At Temple Meads
The office block was red
And dingy,
Half hidden at the bottom of the
Taxi rank.

A couple of times
Dad showed us
Where he worked,
An open office of
Telegraph levers,
The bosses lurking dark
Behind the walls.

Morse code was used,
All tappity-tap,
And dad was adept
Routing trains
Across the West.

We used his office pads
At home for notes and homework,
The Telegraph brand
Across the top,
Me proudly showing
My mates at school
How Dad was keeping
Train wheels turning
In the world.

The office block is gone now,
A space waiting
For its re-incarnation,
And dad will still be there,
Tapping out his messages,
Driving home to us,
Smiling.

What's In There Mum - Pud?

When fires were lit with kindling wood
And knotted paper wreaths,
And Dad prepared the toffee sticks to see us
Four so pleased,
When Mum called out for us to come when
She had made the teas,
Then we were small and happy,
David, Roger, Ann and me.

We used to walk to Hancocks Woods
Across the old black bridge,
And wait for monster trains below to soot
Our socks with bits,
Then ran to join the black-hand gang
In a stone fight at the pit,
I hiding in an old tin hut,
Afraid of being hit.

Ann was brave in saving us from
Bullies down the lane,
And Roger brave in taking Dave to
Talk to Sue and Jane,
While I remained upon my bike
Or fiddled with the chain,
My tongue too shy to say the words,
My heart quite lost in pain.

While Dave and Ann stayed close to home
I and Roger moved,
The links of smells and memories
We'd shared remaining good -
The time I came in from the back
In search of Mum and food,
And patted on the oven, asking
'What's in there, Mum - pud? '

Ian Keenan

What's The Point?

What's the point
Of poetry? ;
How can the sun on this path
Be conveyed,
The quiet of the church,
The silence of the gravestones,
The stillness
Where my little boys
Once ran?

□

At the centre of this heart
The blood pumps of my past,
The growing up of self
And all about me,
And neither words
Nor even God
Can capture
How I ache and cry,

For they have gone,
And I am left a man
And father,
Weak perhaps,
Perhaps close to my end,

But waiting even so
For one more sight
Of boys now men
Whose absence moves me
Far beyond the weighty words

Of poetry.

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Ian Keenan

Who Knows When

In front of the telly,
Laptop open on Facebook as usual,
Ollie shouts his agreement with the book's
Manifesto.

He is going later to the dentist for his teeth check,
But until then he will prepare his case
For his Uni friends,
Many parents of whom he feels
Should at least be deported for their
Capitalistic beliefs.

Then he cuddles his cat,
Cooks a lovely noodle-based meal,
And reminds me of his younger self,
With 'love you dad and see you later',
Driving off once more in the Polo,
To be seen who-knows when.

Ian Keenan

Wicked Thoughts

Never having kissed you,
I know I wouldn't like it,

And never having touched your skin,
Or placed my head in the small of your back,
Or held a buttercup beneath your chin,
I know I wouldn't like it.

The stars are out tonight,
My cat prowling the garden,
And above the moon waits,
Hope washing across her face
With the sun's turning,

While below the water races fast
In the tide's ebb and rising,

Your saltiness imagined on my tongue.

Ian Keenan

You Came

You came when
A Watery Moon
Blinded me with its
Repetitious cycles;
My eyes were awash
With yesterdays and
Tomorrows,
And the thing was done.

You, born red in a second,
Died white
In a year,
Choked on the dust
Of days and days
Crumbling
Into silence.

Ian Keenan