

Poetry Series

Peter Jones
- poems -

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Peter Jones()

Aux Chasseurs

From Montmartre to the Gare Du Nord,
the Faubourg St Denis drops down
through warren'd streets of nothingness;
anonymous. At times: winter greyed and traffic roared;
somewhat decayed in now-blurred lines.
This face is bland but does not frown.

The ordinary is so alive and no more so than in the bars,
where the now will just survive,
amid the shiny urns that steam
with coffee smells, and are kept busy
by brief customers who, in their stars,
no longer have the time to dream.

"Aux Chasseurs" is one such place
named from another distant time
when sportsmen went by train to hunt;
stopping here to anticipate
with eager words; sometimes blunt...
another world, another place; another long forgotten date
to share a thoughtful glass of wine.

An undistinguished marble plaque, is not noticed on the wall.
Amid the furniture of streets it hangs unobtrusive; rather small.
It felt a nation's dying pangs and now speaks little in the dark.

("Ici ont ete arretes Le 5 Fevier 1944 par Le Gestapo, the chef de reseau 'Agir' -
Michel Hollard. Les Charges de Mission, Joseph Legendre, Henri Dujarier et Jules
Mailly - mort par la France le 1er Juin 1944 a Mauthausen")

In one corner of the bar,
the student sits and stares alone.
He reaches for his mobile phone
to call his Mom in Mexico;
he and his world have travelled far.

Peter Jones

Beachscape

There's low scudding clouds on the sea today
and the rain lashes hard in my face
the boarded-up cafes have nothing to say
and I am alone in this place.

The driftwood and netting are blown everywhere
but no show at the end of the pier.
No-one will see and no-one will care
that the Dodgems have no-one to steer.

Seasonal gales tear at faded brave flags:
the promenade windblown and bleak.
Confetti is made up of ripped plastic bags
and the bus shelter's starting to leak.

Where is the magic of so long ago,
to the child that once splashed in the sea?
I see my reflection and just do not know
what became of that innocent me.

Faint echoes of Augusts crammed on a beach
with the deckchairs all out on hire.
I turn up my collar and try not to reach
for remains of a now long dead fire.

Peter Jones

Call Down

Call down now
to the brown marbled witness;
unseen in the frolicking muddletown
that bubbles clear in the dayfall;
girdled in praise
of railings torn down.

Call on the slightest
in the crowds that saw
the gold leaf applied
to the word
in praise of the dogma
that the passing burnt-eyed
could not see
and some long lost truth never heard.

How the bulls roared up the hill!
call down on them too.
Call down on the one rose
that leans on the stone:
older than poppies by far.
No candles are lit
when the tributes fall due,
yet still they are bright
for the martyr proclaimed.
And call down on the souls
who, for the truth,
found martyrdom too
but never were named.

Peter Jones

Ceremony

Un-colour the sound of the darkened sea;
to leave it outlined in white.
Let the fire-blackened globe
continue to probe
into our salvation tonight.

The gale fires the sparks out over the void,
snatched by the waves, to be drowned.
But these visions of noise
are merely decoys
that trap all our lives in their sound.

And the stuttering candles survive in the storm;
poised on the edge of the surf.
Then we cast them adrift
as the ultimate gift:
shooting stars at the moment of birth.

So the dark moon sails invisibly on
in the poppyfield flowers of stars.
In the loom of the light,
we find something tonight:
the way to escape from their bars.

Never and ever this zodiac sea
is singing the song of the tide.
and we now see the mark
that it sings in the dark:
invisible clockwork described.

Peter Jones

Clarbeston

All bright this day in Clarbeston
and soft the railway station dreams
in birdsong roared, while midges dance.
It seems the daffodils hear nothing
but nod their heads at passing trains
and see them all, in knowing glance.

Wild grass and moss make curtain calls
amid the hazel sentinels.
Walls now lost in gorse
unfurl bright banners to the past.
Hold fast the peace of solitude
in great Welshness of the afternoon,
at last.

Peter Jones

Cobbledock Lane

It was well enough done in Cobbledock Lane:
Breathing the grey waked morning.
And the barrels, kicked from the dray
spoke rebellion:
Passing shop windows dressed with baking ladies,
grown old in smiling.

The untiring bay sang its psalm
Through the gusted rigging.
And Spray-salted light
Marked time with the wefting hurry-scurry trains
Sneaking by.

This never-mind day,
Caught in the mirrored canvas,
Ran out to the salt-marsh,
Where the black horse statues stood
Upon the prize of days now past
Amid the unwrapped drizzle...
In all not much
but well enough done.

Peter Jones

Consideration Of Others

Let us make passionate love through the night
And journey erotically far.
But as we combust in an ocean of lust,
Please remember my sciatic-ah.

Peter Jones

Delius

Yes; so it was,
an answer: yes:
even by the orange groves,
trampled by irritable skies
of sharply drawn breaths.
Fingers tap,
and scrape loose moments
from fool's gold.

Always yes it was;
born of dreams to die;
blind as daisies.
lifted by tumbling pens
over the walls:
freedom for a year and a day,
and the cuckoo sang.

Yes once more;
affirmed the headstone
of your sight,
sat in deckchairs, humming,
deep in the undergrowth of paradise.
Such harmonies to hear;
singing then and ever now.

Yes, and one last time it was,
walking like giants
in the warmth of gods
on fair days;
consecrated in fermenting juice
all around the bombed town.
You would tear at the rubble
to free the trapped sound
before it grew dark:
yes and always.

Peter Jones

Dragons

Do the dragons come into your night, Marie-Clare,
And roar out your name when you sleep?
I can see from the pain that's burnt in your stare,
You have terrible secrets to keep.

You tried to forget that slashed dress, Marie-Clare,
And the face that was streaming with blood.
But you cannot blot out the cold rain in your hair,
As you lay there, crushed deep in the mud.

So it helps that the screams of your pain, Marie-Clare,
Have diminished and don't seem so bad.
And maybe it's kinder that, in your despair,
You have now gone so utterly mad.

You just gaze at the walls of your room, Marie-Clare,
Too scared now, even to walk.
But the dragons have still not returned to their lair,
Which is why I can't get you to talk.

In that little glass ball that you grip tight in your hand,
What beautiful rainbows you see.
And now that your thoughts have turned into sand,
Then at last, Marie-Clare, you are free.

Peter Jones

Evening Star

It was, in truth, a sort of tune
which sang a chattered dynasty
and gossiped through the evening hearts,
with scraping chairs around the room;
the beat kept true with thudding darts
and snooker balls in harmony.

Clinking glasses charged the smoke
that rose in such unhealthy clouds
through crates of beer which came and went,
to play their anaesthetic joke.
Their wooden laughter seemed content
to immunise the Friday crowds.

At nine o'clock she rose once more,
unsteady with the gin and lime,
to play the same songs once again -
an icon they could touch and see,
and hear the creaking voice in pain,
sing a battered 'Summertime'

"Best of order" shouted Ron;
a limping barber by the bar,
who loved her dearly in his way
and dreamed of passion now long gone:
a life so empty in the day;
now lit by his un-faded star.

And as she sang, she did not think
of dreams that fired her youth;
but closed her eyes and let notes ring -
inspired by an audience and drink:
they; content to let her sing
and give their lives some sort of truth.

Peter Jones

From A Train

Green and green; and evergreen
in my all, and scurrying
in flickered films
of glimpses, painted green...
and a car in the lane silently shimmers,
as I hear the morning swaying past trees that,
green over green,
silently guard the wet summer sadness,
where cattle stare at the hopping rooks
and do not know
of the things that have been...
or care.

Cloudly and bright:
passing the green.
Where, in my remembrance of once long ago,
I felt the mist
rising unseen from the grass
that was green between green
when we kissed.

So I hum a small phrase
that carries my thoughts
ever and onwards,
listlessly flowing
like the world that is passing
the window beside me
all behind all, so totally green
and all in my knowing
and all in my all
and all in my green.

Peter Jones

Games

They are fighting a war with their guns again:
the boys on the village green;
joyfully trying to kill and maim
in the myth of their lost timeless scene.

The corpses are laying more or less still
And one his clutching his side,
And the cenotaph stone, as someone once said,
Makes an excellent place to hide.

Peter Jones

Guardians

The Guardians of the Gate are there
And will not let me through.
Their swords ring thunder in the night
And draw a blind across my sight.
Your hair fell down in golden light
But I am not with you.

They do not sleep but watch alone
And will not let me pass.
The wall is high, the wall is long,
The wall is deep, the wall is strong
And you are now where you belong
Beneath the summer grass.

And they stand tall beside the stream
Their armour forged in steel.
Their eyes are keen, their grip is firm,
They stand alone and, in return,
They hide the truth that none can learn...
And cause the scars to heal.

Am I locked in? or, just by chance,
Locked out behind this door?
The keepers of the gate are there
Who guard the guards with silent stare.
And you were lovely standing there,
Now lost for ever more.

Peter Jones

I, From My Northing Came

I, from my Northing came:
precessing with my outriders of the first dews,
until I rested in your dreams
and seeped into their warm stones.

Did you see me as you chased your day
Down to the corners?
Or was I hidden from such careless kingdoms,
When hush-tall kingdoms hummed lustily
To contain the last sulking fruits.

Walk then in your warm day: forgetful again.
But you shall know my touch
And embrace my silvered cold -
To purify the tamed torpor
Of waking.

I came as the welcome ecstasy,
Clothed in promises:
And you shall call me winter.

Peter Jones

In All, In All

In all, in all, in coming then;
you come in grace
to walk down one fine morning.
And I shall gentle you in all,
and I shall gentle you.

Held in crinolines of light
that shape you all in all;
your kingdom comes
from somewhere else,
startled in the silence;
and waiting for my voice to call
and waiting for my call.

Summer then was somewhere else;
a mirror seeing you
with blind eyes brighting.
And still you come
and, coming still to see
a seeing of no great consequence,
you came on all in all,
you came on all in all.

Hold softly then to your estate
in all in all, and in your turn
you gentle me;
lightly felt and comely.
Do not recall in coming then
the place from where you came.
The road is lost behind those eyes
and will never come again...
and, all in all,
can never come again.

Peter Jones

In Search Of England

I went in search of England
and found it there, in some slight lane
where, dressed in light,
cobwebs hung from silences:
a lost remembrance, found again.

And rooks pursued their shadow-world
Behind a sleeping wall
That crinolines the manse in solitude,
Where sundials speak upon a time
That never seems to change at all.

But still the milestone crouches low
Against the stile: against the day
When I had left and travelled far
(was it all so long ago?)
but now returned. It seems to me
I never truly went away.

Suddenly... a shock of sunlight
Transfixed me to this everland.
And all the day rang peals around
to celebrate:
My long forgotten England,
My long forgotten Samarkand.

Peter Jones

Insulated Bells

When does the secret of the night
render daylight un-beguiled?
When does such space and inner light
scale the heights of dreamscapes piled
in freedom?

That space proclaims the final fight;
a minute's dance and mankind's right
to dance in waltz-time in the dark -
unseen by us; a jet black spark
of peace.

When is the steel-cut dreaming killed,
and living stilled upon the wheel?
When is the real believing filled
with insulated bells that peal
the silence?

They peal in stutters, licking flame
that splutters bright and claws for life;
and ever will this light remain
a flight again from secret strife
and win.

And win once more a thousand years;
defiant whore, defiant tears
we saw.

Peter Jones

Lake Road

You were holding history then:
long and so long ago:
the un-faced shops that nobody minded
holding to life merely by habit.
You fed the few that were not hungry,
in displaced trivial affections.

So the brave animus rang
changes of old familiars:
earnest in their story
but not knowing why.
And a cornet played Tiger Rag
through the open window
of an August evening.
In return you shed your skin.

All that remains is an old map
and something somebody once said.

Peter Jones

Last Words

Do not call my name, nor grieve.
Neither fear some false deceiving pain
Borne aloft by memories.
But weave a leitmotif
In happy covenant
With some well-remembered then.

For in the amber of your stare
I am trapped,
And so may join your celebration
Of how it is, and where,
And how it was when I was there.

For these remain:
A plain song, keeping time;
To echo and re-echo now.
But even this will die away,
As die it should, in soft decline.
But I will know how well you heard:
How well you understood

Peter Jones

Making Bricks

The steel flashes bright
as my pickaxe draws circles in air
and plunges moist; deep from light
into the softer Wealden clay
sinking in to it's redness there
unimpeded, cutting, loosening, winning
unafraid upon the day.

Side by side we pass the hours
working at our silent task;
save for our flowers of sweat -
small beads of honesty
and dignity of good purpose.
And no-one passed us by to ask
the reason why we were well met.

Rich the seam and richer still the confirmation
that the day was freely won from some obscurity,
in undisturbed beds that saw no sun, and pure in affirmation.

This clay shall weather but not tire: prepared for coming years.
Shaped by hand and deftly cut,
then heated by some inner fire:
an incandescent furnace, but with newly uncontrolled desire.

The bricks that were not there,
now are in tangible reality,
and will form a corner of some home
stood tall, foursquare against the rain;
remembered just by we alone
who formed the clay,
and so remain,
for they, like us
have travelled far.

Peter Jones

Mis Suede Leofe (Written In Early English)

I betacht mis suede leof
somme dayes-eyes for a kisse
and to the song of the munde woderove
she betacht me one; sicht blis.

Ant said I tristou more than weole
you nulle mak me tene.
The derne of leof is ferly wille
and ful horre ist now fleme.

She waxeth grene in blosme springe
that I live namore.
Suede lemmon, you that made me kynge
and you are leofed sore.

The nyhtegales singeth wel
as leof, it striketh stille
and al my wode it ringeth wunne
for al bossom miles wille.

Translation

I gave to my sweet love some daisies for a kiss
and to the joyful song of the woodruffe she gave me one - -such bliss

and said I trust you more than wealth you will not make me grieve
the secret of love is wondrous joy and foul mists are now put to flight.

She has become green in spring blossom that I may live forever
Sweet mistress, you made me king and I love you so much.

The nightingales sing so well as love is flowing still
and all my wood rings with joy and for all content wild creatures.

Peter Jones

On Being 60

Shaken by jackdaws, in their fluttering castles,
To steal whistling arrows from forgotten fields,
I hear the blackthorn twistily move amendments
to old postcards of tilted-at windmills;
now quiet.

But ever yet I dance
In the crab-apple innocence of my lanes;
Courtly in calling, with precious breath.
Rich it is to be here
In the wind-feathered morning:
Carving time in the parish of all my days long.

Sailing amongst mazes
I follow in the windswirl of sounds
I no longer hear - but listening still:
Happy as glistening and rare
In the chuckling water of their light:
Glorious then.

And crossing to service in turn,
I bid the days welcome.
We walk out to read the lesson:
The consecrated ground beneath our feet;
Smooth-worn now,
But polished daily.

Peter Jones

Rasterick R.

"Rasterick R made a brisk 35"
on a damp shard of paper,
found in a drawer -
with the date on the top
(12th of September 1904)

So who were you then, Mr Rasterick R?
And did you enjoy a good tea between innings,
On the Green by the sea?
And going to war
To die or survive
Did you ever remember that brisk 35?

Rasterick R: this is all that is left
But I throw you away
With the rubbish
In a box that I marked 'Yesterday'.
While outside my window I hear a dove call
And, down in the valley, one answers back
From a tree by the side of the Cricket Club hall.

Peter Jones

Sensuality

The sun pours in across the room
And lights us warm in our embrace.
A fond caress in afternoon
As we share this secret place.
Such gentle curves now fill my sight,
Your waist now draped across my thigh:
The skin so smooth and creamy white
I stroke your neck and make you cry.

Your body sings to my soft touch:
Heart now beating faster.
I love you oh so very much:
Sweet beloved Stratocaster.

Peter Jones

Somewhere Else

This hot summer night is stifling me
in this prison of North Pimlico.
From a forth floor flat there is little to see
as I stare at the street down below.

Dull houses bake in the sticky late air
and the evening is holding its breath.
There's a thunderstorm brewing but I do not care
for I'm totally ground down to death.

How I wish I were beating against a wild sea
in a cutter, bound for South Wales,
in a gale that is throwing its spray over me
and singing a song in the sails.

There's a reef in the main and I'm holding a course
For the Mumbles Light out to the West.
I am free and alive, and caught up in a force
that is putting my soul to a test.

But I'm trapped in this brick mousetrap instead,
crushed down by the weight of the walls.
With a bit of a lean and a turn of my head
I can just see the top of St Pauls.

Peter Jones

Spirit Of The Eagle

Once circling poised to stoop
somewhere between the top of the mountain
and the bottom of the sky.

Were there dreams enough to share for free
and not sell them?

That golden hair now flows long again
and I can hear the cheering
known by some other name
and never want to wonder why.

Come down amongst the crowded trees
that do not speak and are safely blind
to trivial affectation, or malevolence.
And shall the meek live with you and touch the wings
of beaten gold; of beaten air.
Experience those of us who care, but are only clay,
and wonder where the singing is.
There is the straw, there is the wheat
and once there was the price to pay.

Dressed now in long remembered loving,
all down the long days of a summer;
you were the innocent; and all-seeing
setting free.
Now the silver vortex spins
you are dissolved in stars
and shining dust.
Drifting in the memory; you made a space.
A small infinity begins:
so shall the unknown legend be.

Peter Jones

Such A Big Moon

Such a big moon it was
that ran all down Pier Street, into the Park.
At the gate, the unknown stone soldier
stares sightless.
At the going down of the sun
we did not remember him.
The peacocks dream their peacock's dreams
of temple bells,
and no dogs bark.

Shop doors shine darkness:
for these are the silent hours
when only the quiet voice is heard
by those who hear, and no-one does
amid the flowers.

A poster fades upon the wall
whilst in the docks
a ship leaves
for Venezuela's distant call, unmissed
on this St. Crispin's day.
There are no happy few: just a cat,
in sleeping, that wakes to see
a neon sign in vigil;
in these the watches of the night
unobscured by dancing light.
And in a room, a woman weeps
for morning, as do we.

Peter Jones

The Dunster Lark

Rise up unfolding, born of clay;
come yet tumbling from the gale.
You are not dead; your eye is clear,
so sing your weeping madrigal

So lives the fiercely burning wing,
forged in anguish from the steel.
Again it fades and blows away
to sacrifice, and save the soil.

Soaring high above a field
your cascade starts the lover's tear.
Seen just once, and in your grace,
unconsumed yet by the fire.

The knowing eye, unknowing stares
into the great infinity.
The dreadful judgement of your flight;
beacon bright, it comforts me.

And as you fall into the dross
and feathers blow about the wind:
the knowing only shall remain -
the echo of the living mind.

Peter Jones

The Power Of Flight

To dream of flying, across the rooftops
and out over the coal black sea.
To shed the weight that holds me down
I flex my untroubled muscles
unexpectedly.

The final hours will quickly flee the field
no excuses now.
No reasons for undue delay.
To stand upon the edge
forever is no option.
If I must fly
I fly today.

And on that edge, upon the dream,
I simply step - take just one pace
and fly exultant in the night
of nights unwitnessed;
save for the keeper of the gate
who may not recognise
my face.

Do I fall or do I fly?
The first short step will soon tell me
that, if I fall,
in swooping down,
so shall someone say of me
that in his inconsequential way
he tried to fly, in valediction,
unexpectedly

Peter Jones

Time For Our Time

Come give me your tomorrow
And I shall give you mine
And all our thens and never-were's
Will celebrate a time.

A time of drawing near my love
A time of coming soon.
And I shall cherish you, my love,
Not wish upon a moon.

I give you back your yesterdays
As you gave mine to me:
Beyond the hands of all the clocks,
Beyond infinity.

Beyond the time before we met
My words cannot explain:
Just how it was before we met
And never want again.

Peter Jones

To Rex Whistler

And we caught sight of flooded fields
across our unexplaining lives,
dazzled by a brief bright light;
not knowing what we saw
and would not see again.
But still our eyes,
Although protected by these shining shields,
Were deafened by the drowning rain
Along the very edge of reason.

You painted sounds we never could quite hear
And, in such season of endearment
Then laid across the page,
You set the dripping walls alight:
Graffiti made glorious,
Summoned to a stage
From some other place we could not know
Along drowned bridleways
That waited for the ebb to show
The earth reborn
and quickly stilled
Behind your door.

Do not call down explanation:
Think only of those prophecies:
Songs of unknown worth -
unfulfilled no more.

Peter Jones