

The Seduction

Holy Island is softening

Weather ravishes rock

Grinding to roundness

Vegetation separates soil

Divides and conquers

Even the base is softened by the sea

Bleaching beaches to virgin white

The incessant lick of the faithful tide

Is ever persuasive, a slow seduction

Bloomdusk

This black flower inside my head

Taproots its way down to my soul

Its petals fill up every hole

Through which my senses should be fed

The leaves that fuel its heartless growth

Absorb only the evening's light

And tendrils blind grope through the night

Encircling nerve and muscle both

Its woody stem that once was green

Grows more sclerotic by the day

Supplanting my poor vertebrae

There's phylum where once spine had been

From vulgar stamen pollen dust

Coats my pituitary with fear

As I infect all those who near

The stench of my necrotic lust

One day this husk of me will break

And this black flower will stand alone

No longer wrapped in flesh and bone

Nor parasitic marriage make

The memory of my blood will last

In cold and thoughtless chlorophyll

That flows through verdant veins until

The genes from plant to plant are passed

From Towers

[For Joe, after P. B. Shelley, after graduating]

Alcoholically forged, this alloy
is truer than the soberest judgement;
our cups mere catalysts for solemn fire
as elements brought together by joy
of learning find not mutual consent
but blend of consciousness almost entire;
intent state and statement of vowed intent,
dark humour balanced against intellect,
the wisdom to recognise each defect
and labour to hasten our sharp ascent.

We could with some justification claim
to be grasping the reins of destiny
at last after years of such wandering
as had dulled to a glow the fragile flame
of our unexploited ability;
but now fate feels our spurs' insistent sting
as we approach a mirage we clearly see:
a city, a port with a thousand links
to places where the philosopher thinks,
the artist paints, and the writer writes free.

How we had denied our inner natures,
mediocrity drowning precious hours;
how, somnambulant, we had blindly walked
without any regard for our futures
while others, with perhaps lesser powers,
had strode the paths of which we had only talked;
and what travesty, if such gifts as ours
had been squandered any longer on time
spent marking itself, with no mind to climb
this magnificent city's golden towers.