

Evensong

1- Bells at Abbey

Bells and organ drones

Like undulating draperies
In the distance

Collective birdsongs

Post their two-pence overtones
With delicate insistence

Not a man of faith,

So much as one
Of cynical irreverence

But how just such an afternoon

Can buy the
Marble-hardest heart
And hold its
Ever-tempered sneer
In quiet, momentary deference

2- Elemental

Whether on this day all beauty fadeth
Retrospect shall never dim its call
Rather, as does memory collate it,
Shall filtering but magnify its haul

As years long compress to mere minutes
So decades snugly sit within one song
Endeared, this hour's palm has cupped within it
Some fragmentary second everlong

How miniscule, that clock nor eye'd discern,
Yet valuable a galaxy its own
Like candle oft unsung in died-young burn
Beatified for, during shine, what's shown

And love, a fickle stick of wax as such,
Life's boundless darkness beautifies how much

3- Sycamore Sway

Sycamores sway,
 Goes brusque, the evening breeze,
Clipping the weak limbs
 Even-ing the trees
 Assembled in scattered
 Stance in the wood
Discussing the
 Coming of autumn,

Knowing they'd never
 Succumb to the shed,
 Stay drape-leaved all season,
 All year,
 And all time
 If they could.

4- Invitation

What of death's suave invitation,
 Engraved in the
 Flitting wit of
 Distant tolling bells?
Where the church-mouth bleeds
 Parishioners profusely
 Noon begins to ask the answers
 Midnight solely tells.

5- Vespertine

Every intention a day all its own,
 From spawning to dawning
 To noon's high renown
 To midday's fruition
 And twilight's prediction
That irrelevant is it
 If we'd dreamt not cloud,
 If we'd begged not night,
That flight of the sun,
 As surely as risen,
Shall horizon's limitless lust
 Yet requite
 And summon the bulb back down

Chambers

One chamber of the heart is merely a foyer,
 where perchance employers
of modest acquaintance
 may dock their ships
 their stiff upper lips,
beg borrow a coat hook
 or basin to rinse,
but before is their presence distended,
 a hat's given tip,
 a jovial quip,
 a horsewhip implicit glance,
 and (their welcome as much as)
 their stay is ended.

One chamber of the heart is an anteroom,
 Where comers familiar
 who tread till our doorstep
 are given admittance once, then stopped,
Granted a brief
 recline at the railing,
 against the credenza,
 to offer cadenza in quaint regaling,
Permitted perhaps to strut to the chaise
 for a sit or for respite,
 for a spell or for anecdote's tell,
though biscuits and tea then goodbye
 tends to be
 their cut-to-the-chase length of visit.

One chamber more is a drawing room.
 An occasional friend
 or confidant spends
 a jacketless, shoeless hour.
A Cabernet served, or whiskey deserved,
 where tomes of equivalent
 wounds are devoured.
Come roasted like 'mallows
 the hallowed few things--
 some simplest poem
 or tune someone sings--
 and toasted are these,
for they boast of the sole and solemn reprieve
 from all where else
 living has followed.

One chamber further, deeper at heart is a bedroom.

 This is, though higher,
 sorely deprived of headroom.

 This is while shallower, steeper than still
 the climb of the dead-room.

Here is both weeper
 as well gentle sleeper,
 as much so as dreamer
 of future foregone or gone AWOL,
where here serenade could
 quartet of walls
 melodious of the wed room.

Where mattress--mere, heretofore, buttress for body's
 odious, cruel collapses--
could serve newly now
 as duly a fortress
where vagabond heart's uncharted lapses
 could perch unto bough
of blossom long-sought-for endowed
could winnow all gossip and gossamer out from cocoon
 sprout into bloom
and up-wing where clout
 of croonings unsung
could plunder no longer
 the widower thumb under
shadow of ghostliest hunger;
 costly in both
 how it frightens,
 as well as how tighten
both hasp-hinge and jaw
 so silence presides;
so silence pervades,
 till he who resides
knows only the jading voices
 of clock-tick and lock click,
Permitted perhaps but vainly to peer
 from single-paned window
and weep of escape from the dread room.

Radiana

At a minor loss,
Brimming at the lip-line
to mirror-sing your glare, but
afraid to shine a light upon
your coyer, sweeter gestures,
for fear that were you made aware
you might employ them
less by grace of nature,
But yield to pause
or wonder insecurely,
or pander them impurely
with contrivance, affectation,
or ration them too hesitant,
or worser still, wield them
as manipulative weapons;

The slight diminuendo
and corresponding upturn of inflection
when you have a tender tidbit
of some trivia to mention,

The crinkled nose disclosing
a demureness
typically obscured by
interposing sureness of demeanor,

A lean awry of
head at such a subtle tilt
a gilt seductive subterfuge,
A timely rush of rouge
across the lacquered porcelain
of marble-taut but silk-soft skin,

The parrying the eyes away
a feint, to swing them in again,
plant a plaintive haymaker
to make sure what is silent
gets its say,

And the flippant fawning fondness
found in how you witness
without cynicism,
with never naïve innocence,
a world so often pitilessly witless

So, chomping at the bit aside,
bitten tongue abides
where indulgence of these
small and secret wonders
must be undertaken mutely

Odd how it can dead its life,
blind it of its incidental brilliance,
sap its very essence
when we vie, however lovingly,
to shed a doting light
upon a beauty

Middlemorn

Day knows it.

Night knows it.

Middlemorn succinctly shows it.

Noontime nods.

Evening trots its sods of knowledge

Inhales and, sodden, stows it.

Sleep pauses.

Weeping clauses vie to

Grant eliminative respite.

Pens ink it.

Yens think it.

And song, but barely, slows it.

Time vows it.

Mind sows it.

The body frail and fruitless reaps.

Eyes avert,

Thus signaling alert,

And toebound gazes lock the aim for keeps.

The trees shed it.

Their crooked branches shan't rethread it.

The leaden bough endows the

Skulking raven perch.

Shadows hint it.

Due debts mint it grimly.

An overarching parchment's

Marksman-sharp writes cursive lurch.

5 knows it.

7 knows it.

10 through 12 distinctly crow it.

Till middlemorn recites again

The verbless diminution's verses,

Telling end of mission,

End of search.