

In Memoriam Frances

Poems
by DW Myatt

[So Sad](#)

[Such Gestures](#)

[A Tragedy of Beauty](#)

[This Is The Garden of Her Youth](#)

[This Is All That There Is](#)

[Such Are The Moments Of Illusion](#)

[We Are The Ones The Dead Leave Behind](#)

[The Ineffable Goodness](#)



So Sad To Leave

So sad to leave, to watch your face
Smaller, smaller as the train took me
Down, southward toward a home
That is no home
Without that indefinable presence
Which is you:

The Sun caught you, then,
That late morning as you stood waving
Having trembled when we embraced
Under a sky blue but clouding
Following two so short days
Together.

And now there is rain
As I travel feeling
The loss of this
Leaving -
How many more days of cloud
Before the Sun of love bursts forth
To bring the warmth
That is you?

Here, the train has stopped
Where some city rears up
Amid the green:
Any yet -
So many loves there
Caught
As I am caught,
Waiting.

So many days
Passing
As the fields of growing greening crops
Pass beyond the glass

That makes a window
For this soul-less
If now speeding
Train:
So much life
Bursting forth
Within -
A dream of you, me,
Sharing...

DW Myatt

Such Gestures

She gestures - such an awkward expression of pain
As inner turmoil, anxiety,
Reaches out to change face, eyes,
Posture;
And I am lost, adrift
Not knowing what to say, do
As outside Dawn with Her lights and colours
Reveals the Frost of Night.

There was a Nightingale, in the darkness -
Such beauty -
As she, I, lay, exhausted,
Unable, unwilling to speak
Then
Beyond the days past
When she, lacking Medication, argued
Begged, manipulated, struggled, hoped and lied
Losing all self-respect
And seeking something - anything - to if only for one moment
Relieve the dread, that fear, that shaking
That snared her:
Three, four, more scenarios of self-inflicted death.
But no games, here -
No clichéd or acted cry
For help
Only deep disturbing hurting
Born of utter, complete self-loathing
And wordless self-despair.

There is, must be, should be Life beyond
This:
A walk in woods alone
When the cold wind of Winter
Brings that joy of knowing.
For there is living there:
No words,
Nothing to confuse or bring the Anger -
Since the tree is only ever a tree;

The wild Deer only ever wild Deer
And the path is only ever the path
To take me up toward the summit of the hill
Where I can sit to watch a distant sea
Below.
No one, nothing, to disturb with words
The sanctity that is Nature.

I did not, shamefully, acquit myself that well,
For there was anger, rising,
As promises lay broken among the lies;
But then - suddenly for some reason
There was love returning
Growing, spreading forth from understanding:
What could, should, I do?
I did not know, and stumbled,
An old man slowly walking unknown woods, at night...

One day later, and I am become alone
Again
 As once, that week ago
 Before her anguish came to break itself
 In waves of days upon me
Ready now to walk forth onto hill
To feel the quiet wordless peace
Of rural Nature:

And she is in her home, again,
Striving to re-create, define
Such living as is her life -
Such anguish, to leave her standing by her door
As the snow melted as snow melts
When cold rain descends
To bleaken city mist.

DW Myatt

A Tragedy of Beauty

There was the trembling of her hands, their coldness:
The anguished face,
And I held her
To reassure her of her beauty.
But she did not then, as almost always,
Believe me
So fragile her self-esteem.

On Sunday, the cat of some neighbour beside us,
We sat in that small garden
Not far from the centre of York -
She cold, enwrapped in her coat,
I in my shirt:
There was the late May Sun to warm us,
But the cool wind stole what little warmth she felt
As she sat on the grass, oblivious to its dampness.
There were words - from me -
About life, love, a past,
And she listened, answering only
To castigate herself.

She was beautiful, even then when that sad expression came to mask
Her life -
Beautiful, with eyes of changing blue,
That golden hair.
Beautiful, wordlessly reaching out to me in that moment
As she had reached out to me for the six weeks
Of my stay,
Pleading in silence
While I with words formed some stupid expression,
Some ignorant idea born of blind arrogance.

There are no excuses for my failure, then:
No excuses:
My intellect the snare which trapped me.
Too many words; too little gentle, re-assuring, silent love.
I should have felt, known, that awful anguish which transformed her -

Cloud to warm Sun -
And held her, held her
Until the warmth of Summer lived in her,
Again.
The Sun is not annoyed by cloud
Knowing rain for the burgeoning life it is
But I, in my blindness, deafness, ignorance, did not know -
So many clouds, I had not thought the world contained so many.

"Please don't go," she pleaded on that Sunday,
But I did go, selfishly, stupidly, vainly,
Leaving here bereft, alone:
Nine hours later, she lay dead.

There are no excuses for my failure, there.
Now, three days on, such warmth of Sun to take me out
Into the green fields of this Farm:
Too late the blue sky, the heat of June.
Too late, this understanding.
Too easy, perhaps, for me to die, here, now, as she died
And as I just intended.
Should I - must I - live the agony of this knowledge,
To redeem what was to what might be:
Some words capturing the sun of her life which the clouds of illness
Hid?

So I am crying, weeping, beating my fists into the earth
Here where the tall Oak shades the shallow pond:
No words of mine to express the tragedy of her life and beauty.

DW Myatt

In Memory of Fran, died May 29, 2006.

This Is The Garden of Her Youth

This is the garden of her youth
Where, for years, she as a young girl
Played
And where there was life, laughter,
Tears.

This is the garden where later in her living
She came to sit in those days
When life depressed her to leave only an impression
Of being not quite
Alive.

This is the garden where we sat, together,
When I as I often was in my stupid selfish expectation
Expected more than that half-smile,
That awkward touch,
The silence about our future and our life,
Unable then to appreciate the deep depths
Of her utterly anguished despair:

This is the large garden, South-facing,
Where I sit, alone now, waiting the hours
Before we, her friends, gather
Dead
From her leaving, her loss.

There is the warming Sun, of morning:
Sparrows on a lawn,
The collared-Dove, calling
And two Butterflies, twisting, flying
As if joined by some unseen changing thread
Of Life.

Here I sit, waiting
For answers,
But there is only the slight breeze
To move the tops of the trees:
Her cat, content, curled up
There in that shade where the Eucalyptus tree
Outlived her.

No words
To describe, remove, the guilt
For she, cutting her threads to life,
Killed herself after I selfishly, stupidly, shamelessly
Left, deaf to her pleading.

What is there now but the strong Sun in a sky of cloudless

Blue:

A funeral to make such tears

As move us to regret

The life, lost,

Taken?

And prayers, yes, there should be prayers:

But, who, to hear them?

This is the garden of her youth

Where she, four years old, played

And her father planted the sapling

Which grew to have a cat sit beneath its spreading tallness

While a man wept

And the hot Sun of early June bore down

To leave him mournful, humbled

With no words, nothing, to express his loss:

Only memories

To fracture such self-esteem as kept him selfish

Amid the illusion that was the living of his life.

Will there be a kneeling, a prayer,

A silent, humble, hope?

DW Myatt

This Is All That There Is

This is all that there is -

A peaceful lying in warm flowering grass
As the Sun of July moves, slowly,
And a breeze keeps a certain stifling humidity
Away:
So hot, my back seeps sweat where it touches ground
Here on a hill sloping to meadow, valley, stream.

This is all that there is -

After a life, shared:
A new nexus when the slight sleep of heat
Touches us
To leave only an impression of stillness
Bringing
A touching of the Cosmos living
Beyond.

This is all that there is

To pass that Time until that journey
Where birth's beginning
Merges with the being becoming beyond
Death
So that we, merging, become more than the hill,
The Sun, the silence
To be that warmth of beauty
That creates, Summer-slowly,
 As when I awoke to hear the birds of life
 Chorusing Dawn
 And we smiled as she lay, naked, beside me
 Still half-clinging to the sleep
 Of Night.
 Such a simple happiness
 There
 When we moved as we moved
 To merge
 As the humid hours merged
 To bring droplets of sweat

Until satiated through slowness we slept
Touching breathing being
Such essence as kept us
Alive:

So this is all that there is, now
Since Death claimed her

DW Myatt

Such Are The Moments Of Illusion

Such are the moments of illusion:
The hot Sun of late September
When the wet grass
Dries
And I lie stretched out
While still-living Butterflies become moved by wings, wind,
Here beneath another sky
Of blue.

Such re-assurance, this warmth and illusion
Of that colour
With sleep easy, for a moment,
Because no guilt, loss, or cares -
No seeing of those last moments
Of her life -
Since now the warming memory rises

When we had sat hill-above-sea
To watch the white clouds thermalled
Where sea stretched to horizon
With life a joining of purpose as two hands, bodies,
Touched:

So I am caught in one brief beautiful nexus
As a Dragonfly lands where
The grass-held hand
Is stilled:
It turns its head left then right then left
To go
To be lost
To sound then sight.

No suspension, of being, as I wish:
No capture as the Numen rises as it rises
With warm Sun
When the quiet peaceful sleep of fields

Caught me late-Summer
While I wandered remembering
The dreaming hopes
Of youth:

They are dry now
As the pond which the hot Sun
Of a long Summer dried
As I am dried:
No rain of love to fill one nexion
With life.

DW Myatt

We Are The Ones The Dead Leave Behind

We are the ones the dead leave behind:
We, who remain to struggle with remorse, guilt, failure
After she - he - have found the courage
To end their lives.

We are the ones who find them,
Or who receive that sudden unexpected, expected, call:
Our life stilled, lost, irrelevant
In that moment.
What have we to give them, now?
What have we but words said,
Unsaid, deeds done or promised unfulfilled?
What have we to give them now -
Too late the love, the words, the effort
That might have saved them:
Too late this knowing of such sadness and such grief.

So we cry, or force back those tears
Stumbling forward
Minute to minute, hour to hour, day to weary day
Hoping, trusting, wishing
For something.

Or do we - and how often - plan
As they planned
Unable to bear their loss, the grief?
So many plans, to die - and what prevents us?
Some small intimation of life, perhaps
Or our own weakness
For even with their ending how often we lack the resolve
They showed
In that last breathing of their lives
When bleak and utter desperation
Claimed them.

How do we, can we, live when guilt at our living
Wakes us in the late or early night
And we hope, pray, believe:
But this is life - they are gone; dead, taken from us

And no words, no deeds now can redeem or save them:

So we move from night to day to night -
We, the living-dead that our dead leave alive.

DW Myatt

The Ineffable Goodness

There is, can be - should be - an ineffable goodness about life:

Warm Sun, seeing-off dark cloud
When we walk among hills
And stop, to feel the scenery below
Spread out before us, mile upon glorious mile
Knowing then in that instant the numinosity
Of love and of life:

We are born for this,
We are meant for this,
But how often - and how many times -
Do we turn away in anger, indifference or hate
Losing thus the beauty of a sky cloudless
In its blue
When we, met for the first time, sat sipping our coffee
Daring to look, and felt the need to touch, then
There, as life in that city Cafe passed as such life
Passes by?
How often -and how many times -
Do we forget the feel, the warmth, of that first embrace,
Love to love, life to life, death to the death
That is indifference, intolerance, hate?

There is such a simple lesson, there -
When we lie on the warming grass as the breeze of Summer
Takes away the heat of Sun:
A special remembering when we - the adult -
Recall the joy of play;
So much lost, for so little,
Forgetting the life that lives, within,
Lost, taken, when we forget the unique possibility
Which we, still children, are:
One life among so many,
One possibility of growth
Growing up between the Light and the Dark

When memories of suffering and of sadness change us
Bringing back the slow, quiet, silent, beautiful rhythm of Life:

And that time when we, on that beach, sat
Amid the sand with wet feet, Sun-drying,
Each hour, minute, precious
As love grew as it grew
From each kiss, touch, smile
And we knew gentleness as it reached out
To claim us, change us
Until we felt our very being would burst
So great the life that pulsed within us,
So great the joy

As when we, high-tide caught, scrambled up those jagged rocks
Laughing, playing, while the foam of the Sea
Grew small, smaller, until weary and cut but happy
We lay down in cliff-top grass to kiss, there
On that day when Life changed us:
For a moment.

But we who might grow, could grow, forget in the living
These lessons of love -
So strange, such lapses
When there is, can be, should be, an ineffable goodness
In living and in life.

DW Myatt
