

The Wake of Wonder

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A sequence on love - political, personal, sexual and ecological, asking questions on the possibility of saving the world, and the whole damn thing..

As we gaze from the portals of the past, to wake the dead, and look to the future, for the awakening of spirit..

Written in 1987, reflecting on the events of the 'sixties, seventies, and eighties

Prize winner in the Scottish International Open Poetry Competition, 1997.

FIVE – our heroine ponders further on the nature of human love – does it encourage self-interest, consumerism, and therefore pollution?

If human love is only based on sex
Why is it such a feeling only wrecks
The state, the law, the constabulary
Attested for, time and again, in voluntary
Contributions to the free press. It seems
People are only really themselves in dreams,
And seldom think of any society
Save in terms of respectable sobriety.
So forget fellow-feeling, what's held in common
It's like the time Caesar crossed the Rubicon
And claimed all his. All now wish to own
Everything they see, or take a loan.
Sharing is now an idle vision
Best endured while watching television.

So annihilation is the structure of the whole
If we are given over to selfish goal,
Conquest, conspiracy, exploitation
Murder, pillage, and infiltration.
The past excesses of extinct society
Were bent with its own satiety -
What's left but conquering neighbour's lands
Intimidation, weapons, not loving bands,
No wholesome hearts to expand without friction
Trying to prove that war is just a fiction.
Not so at all. Instead we have the spectacle
Of warring nations, and peace lovers ramshackle.
Swords into ploughshares! What optimism.
Did someone say light breaks up in a prism?

To survive, we must expand the caring zone,
Embrace others we would not call our own.
When we rush to buy a motor car
Remember, though we travel very far
We leave unfriendly fumes, pillage the earth
For which future generations will feel dearth.
The honking snakes of traffic in a city
For perambulating babies have no pity,
The layer of ozone in the stratosphere
Is diminishing for sure, year by year,
Hamburgers are eating into forests
Acid rain is making stone quite porous
The bombs are piling up – while a homily
Tells us all that is important is our family.

Appeasing the voracious household god
Is simply now a matter of the right wad
Of notes. The world may yet turn desert
If unhappy couples continue to subvert
Nature, and her wise house-keeping way.
Future generations will have to pay –
Unless, of course, someone drops the bomb
And the world itself become an ashen tomb!
God spare us, but 'twould perplex you,
Pain, terrorise, affright and vex you –
But something in our purpose is germane
To this most overwhelming side-track: the main
Thrust of my argument is why people
Feel love is only congruent 'neath a steeple.

The kernel of the matter is what people feel
- Romantic Love – is selfish and unreal.
Let those who wish to exploit, do so.
Do they deserve their riches? Rousseau
Gave us a common humanity outside the state,
But it's enough for me that I tolerate my mate
And reign supreme in my own front room,
It has no view, save the TV, and the tomb.
And then when we build our air-raid shelter
We'll have it so when we run helter-skelter
And the sirens sounding, there'll be a few
Left of us, perhaps just me and you.
So therefore, the idea of man and wife,
Somehow always ends up in strife.

So science is the genius for our age,
It governs life at every stage
From neonatology to the mortician's skill,
Reproduction, from sterility to the pill.
Two-headed monkeys, smoking dogs, and worse
Obscenities which wouldn't decorate a verse,
Pets with eyes burning with chemicals
Just to show us what brand of syrup kills
Rats climbing on endless treadmills,
To the desired end we should understand all ills.
Science has made babies in test-tubes,
And with mammeoplasty can construct new boobs,
Science has made these bombs, without God's abduction
To bring about his gorgeous world's destruction.

The good fairy at birth, was in no hurry,
First time to learn language, less a worry,
Communication was our raison d'être

Truth the by-product, our onlie begetter.
Yet when people let science go to their heads
They put everyone in different beds -
A definition to shred common humanity
Separating us and them, you and me.
Discrimination is our culture's crown
Best when worn upside down.
To celebrate diversity should be our aim,
Not sacrificing people to the game
Of science, but with our best love hurled
To welcome each child into the world.

**Postscript by the poet Rosemarie Rowley publishing the poem at the present time
2019.**

"I feel that vulnerable young people are not to blame, rather it is the big banks, companies and advertisers that have created this false reality of consumerism and marketed through sexual images, signs and language. This is in the poem an oblique means of getting at this truth through irony which does not diminish the genuine love young people feel for each other. At the present time young people show every sign of waking up"