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Poems

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Poems

Abstract

VACANCIES, A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

Robert Gray

VACANCIES

A dark room and
the sea, grown dark,

seems a building
opposite. Here

he sits without
the light and drinks,

feet up. And there's
a view, switched on –

the big-chested
moon, come home, is

wriggling out of
her bright jumper.

A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

The hollyhocks,
each spire of bells
in white or mauve,
lean from stone walls

all the way up
the muddy path
to the village
Sylvia Plath

is buried in –
from stony cracks
they bloom, inlaid
like candle wax,

in sodden, frail
conglomerate;
these 'reach too high'
says Eliot.

I've no taste for
romanticism
and calm my heart
to seek your room.

Something to do –
I'm not a fan;
yours aren't the poems
I read again.

I find your grave
is small, child-like;
you've always seemed
claustrophobic,

but this – too sad
as final ground;
such narrowness
un-American.

A mince of earth,
a bare rose-cane,
a banal phrase
on your headstone –

had you the choice
that brought you here?
Your limbs were meant
for Florida

(Miss Bishop loved it).
My old disquiet's
your will to work
artistic spite.

The marvellous gift,
its use so small –
that Ich, Ich, Ich
impossible .

It seems we choose
the known – ourselves;
what we prefer
is our own cells.

Hence your husband –
tough poetry,
leather jacket,
astrology;

the Bronte moors,
that sweeping clouds
pick to the bone
as if they're birds.

Phantoms skirmish –
the raininess
that spills on stone
an ox-tail grease.

Stones everywhere –
their loaves, the road;
they truss the hills –
it seems they're lead.

Fine, if one's own;
bound to depress
you, a girl of
the Golden West.

Is art what comes
powerfully
upon the nerves –
a Nazi rally?

One can, with art,
choose emotion
reason approves,
not just sensation.

That great gifts fail
must overwhelm.
Despite white clouds,
a bank of elms

I leave. The church
of Heptonstall
glares like Batman
above the hill.