

The Hedgerow



Issue 29, Winter 2011 ...a tangle of words from local writers...

The Hedgerow, a free publication from writers in the Epping Forest area, is distributed in libraries and bookshops from east London to Epping. Thank you to everyone who sent in submissions or helped with this edition. If you would like to write for *The Hedgerow* we would be pleased to hear from you.

Skelldale

A place uninhabited for all the centuries back....fit rather it seemed to be the lair of wild beasts than the home of human beings. Its name was Skelldale.

My tale starts here; hidden in the abbey cloister. The moon is up and the monk's garden is bathed in an unearthly light. Listen, the bells are ringing in the dead of night. The brothers are on their way down the night stairs, to keep their night vigil in the church. Whilst they sing the psalms I have time to explain how I came to be here.

I was raised in comfort and plenty up at the mill house. Yet, I wanted to see more of the world. I left home on a cart load of flour, bound, for the bake house. I must have been sleeping when the cart was hauled over the river Skell. Woken with a start by the sound of a heavy bolt being drawn against the doors of the porter's lodge, I watched with rising panic as our horse was lead across the West Green into the abbey grounds by a tonsured monk. He wore the rough, brown tunic of a lay brother. But, I was no noble bound for the guest house, and would not be welcome if he discovered me hiding amongst the flour.

As we approached the great abbey building, a round and ruddy cheeked man dressed in white robes, came bustling out of a parlour to greet us. After a nod and quiet exchange of words, the red-faced fellow approached the cart. I shrank back into the space between the soft bags of flour, so he would not see me. The cellarer swiftly counted the bags then waved us on.

We were lead into a small enclosure where the horse was untethered and the cart pitched by a tiled walkway. There I waited, watching the horse graze until the bells sounded the sixth hour. Everyone in the place appeared to stop to pray. At the moment they raised their heads, I squeezed my small body out from between the flour bags and slipped in through the window arches. I leapt down amongst the goods piled all about the place - cabbages, cress, apples and damsons. It was well past my lunchtime; being hungry I helped myself to as much fresh fruit as I could cram into my cheeks. Working along the line of food stuffs awaiting storage in the vaulted cellars, I came upon a basket of freshly baked loaves. I bit into a loaf that had fallen onto the earthen floor; it was the best I had ever tasted.

Feeling bloated and not a little guilty after feasting uninvited on the monks' food, I crept into a dark corner between two large barrels and promptly fell fast asleep. I was awoken by the abbey bell tolling the ninth hour. Peeping back out over the West Green, I could see the place was deserted. A clatter of wooden bowls announced that the monks were eating in their refectory close by, upon which I grabbed my chance to escape unseen and raced out from my hiding place, around the front of the great abbey church. No one except Saint Mary, watching from her niche above the West window, saw me go.

I headed for the caves where the masons who had built this monastery, chiselled sandstone from the cliff. There I played until dusk fell. When I heard the bell ringing for Vespers I wondered if it was time to go home. I made my weary way down the darkening slopes. Stowing away on a flour cart had certainly brought me new adventures, but now I simply longed for the familiarity of the mill house.

Just as I was figuring how I might get past the porter, an owl hooted loudly from the woods. A flutter of wings set my heart racing. I ran for my life down the hill, into the abbey porch, through the great West door of the church. A hush fell over me as soon as I entered the building. The aisles were softly lit from several sconces glowing in the white washed walls. The nave was silent and empty. I crept up the south aisle where a short flight of steps lead me through an arched door down to the monks' cloister. The moon was full and I could see quite clearly. I tip-toed past several large oaken doors. Drawn by the feeling of warmth, I approached a low door set in the corner of the cloister. The door swung open and several brothers emerged, billowing heat from their long, white robes. Being small and slight, I slipped unnoticed into the room before the heavy door swung closed on its hinges. Two large fires were burning brightly in a great double-breasted hearth. I remained rooted to the spot, staring at the blaze. Startled by a sudden movement, I felt a hand seize me and knew at once I had been caught!

The hand belonged to a young boy. To my surprise, he seemed pleased to see me. He told me his name was Marmaduke and that he was a novice monk from a noble family. Marmaduke told me all about his family. How he missed his nurse, but most of all he missed his sister. She had been his friend and playmate. Here in the monastery Marmaduke had no one to play with. He explained to me how his sister had made him a parting gift. She had sewn him an undershirt to wear beneath his coarse robes. The father abbot had allowed Marmaduke to keep the shirt and wear it as a special allowance due to his age. Unbeknownst to the abbot his sister had stitched a pocket into the shirt. In this pouch he could hide all manner of forbidden items, spare pieces of bread to eat when he was feeling hungry. Monks only ate once a day! Broken pieces of tallow candle he could use to replace his night light when it burnt out. Twine to fish with, for Marmaduke intended to catch fish to eat one day. And it was the perfect place to keep a pet. What a simply magical gift his sister had made him! A gift that Marmaduke would be honoured to share; for he had always wanted a pet and his pocket was just the right size for a mouse like me.

Emma Liebeskind

Driving home. one late November afternoon

Sky's dome fills my windscreen.
Pale sugar-almond washes
glow in hidden afterlight.
Winter prints trees on horizon
in charcoal veins like coral fans.

Grey houses huddle against
frosted ribbon of road, marked
by spurts of lamplight, matchstick-thin,
until I see a beacon's shine
softly spilling inside out-
home, low-lit through latticed dark.

Hazel Dongworth

Memories of Teenage Reading, 1950-57. Sylvia Ayling

I was born in Glasgow in 1937, the daughter of a chef/hotelier who served his apprenticeship in the LMS's grand hotel at St Enoch's station in Glasgow in the days of steam railways. In the days when the 'Three Bs: bread, beer and burial' guaranteed employment, the Great Depression having robbed him of the opportunity to work in the shipyards, he had sailed to America and returned to Scotland just as world trade slumped. He had met my mother in the Hotel Metropole on the Isle of Man. She was a Liverpudlian, but never once did I hear a trace of Scouse in her speaking voice. While working for the LMS, he was employed on the trains that sped towards the golf links at Gleneagles, catering for a clientele with luxury tastes. The cuisine served in both the grand hotel and on the train at that time was post-revolutionary French. And when father became an entrepreneur, thanks to a substantial loan in 1944 from one of his customers in the City of Glasgow restaurant he ran as manager, a modified menu, based on such food, with its many delectable sauces, was what he gave to his much appreciative guests.

In austerity Britain, they arrived on holiday with their ration books, which he was obliged to lay out on the kitchen table, carefully snipping off the necessary coupons to satisfy the Ministry of Food. Most of these folks came from England, attracted to Dunoon, a small riverside resort, once visited by Gladstone, Florence Nightingale and Robert Louis Stevenson, named in the guide books as Gateway to the Highlands. A modest advertisement in a magazine written by and for railway workers, who benefited from concessionary travel, was enough to keep his business afloat. As they sailed into the Victorian pier on a steamer named after Scott's Waverley novels, they would observe the castle hill with its walls reduced to rubble (once visited by Mary, Queen of Scots who was presented with a rose on that occasion) now replaced by a statue of Robert Burns' Highland Mary. She is wearing a plaid and her right hand rests on her heart.. She is gazing in the direction of Ayr, birthplace of her beloved. Though she had exchanged bibles with the poet, she died of a fever before they were to be married. She is the subject of one of his beautiful love poems – to Mary in Heaven.

Some of the guests became family friends, and provided my brother and myself with such reading matter as American comics (Lil' Abner and Superman amongst them, together with large adverts for Palmolive soap and ersatz jewellery). At the end of their holidays, the visitors would leave behind an assortment of magazines, ranging from Science fiction (with lurid covers) to Lilliput which occasionally contained photographs of unclothed women (I preferred the pretty ladies in frocks), Picture Show and the widely circulated Readers Digest. One particular National Geographical magazine told the History of England in paintings, including Cabot sailing from Bristol, Shakespeare reading to Ann Hathaway in her Stratford home, General Woolf dying at the foot of the Heights of Abraham, Queen Victoria meeting her Cabinet for the first time en dishabille, Florence Nightingale with her Lamp, Captain Oates, fighting through the bitter Antarctic winds and snow with the words, 'I may be away for some time' - the ultimate self-sacrificial Englishman. I owe my love affair with English history to such images as these.

The Hotel grounds formed part of a large estate built, no doubt, by a rich Glasgow merchant, with its own boathouse on the beach and a jetty made up of large stones in the river for ease of embarkation. Every Spring, the tides would recede, exposing banks of sand with sea urchins and scuttling crabs, too late for the visitors who had to put up with stones and barnacles when paddling or (brave souls) swimming in the icy waters. despite the grey skies and rain. In fine weather, braving the midges (a nightmare) they had use of a putting lawn, and a view from the front bedrooms of shipping on its way to the ports of Greenock and Glasgow, the wind carrying the sound of the little accordion bands playing on shipboard as the fleet of steamers plied their way to the Kyles of Bute and beyond, the hills of Renfrewshire two miles distant on the other bank. It had 20 bedrooms, and every winter, I would retrieve my beloved library of books from a cupboard in one of the guests' bedrooms where they were regularly stored, and put them back on my bookcase shelves in the bedroom I reclaimed out of Season..

Sometimes, in the Summer, I would creep in to retrieve an old favourite for a quick reread while the occupying guests were out and about.

This supplemented my weekly Girls' Crystal and Schoolgirls' Friend comics, I used to regularly read 2 little paperbacks containing schoolgirl stories that came out on a regular basis, sold for a few pence. I loved their bright coloured covers, All I can remember about them, was the fresh smell of print on white paper..

Although the hotel, (Alderwood) by name, employed two maids, a chambermaid and a kitchen maid, as it was a family business, we were all four employed to keep the show on the road. My pay was ten shillings a week, for which I was responsible for the washing up, operating a washing machine with a wringer attached, making breadcrumbs for the fish, chopping parsley, flouring liver, helping to dish up meals, hot and cold. I opened a bank account to save that cash - thrift came naturally to a generation reared to think of the starved Armenians . I learned about them from my Dad, who had queued for his mother (a munitions worker) during the First World War, whilst his father served in France as a stretcher bearer.

As for reading, there was no habit of Library-going in our family. Reading, after all, requires time to permit leisure activities. Dad rose at five, had an afternoon nap, and went to bed at 11 p.m. seven days a week. In the winter, his daily newspaper was Beaverbrook's Daily Express (I read William Hickey and Beachcomber), and on Sundays he and my mother would sit before a blazing fire and read the Sundays: the Express, the People, the Pictorial, the News of the World, and The Sunday Post, a family favourite, full of heart-warming tales, with an inner section of cartoons and jokes that no one could have blushed at.

Mother read knitting patterns and Woman magazine. I read Woman's Own, concentrating on the Letters page at the back, and I always turned to Evelyn Home in mother's Woman, with its air-brushed covers, wondering what on earth was contained in the agony aunt's personalised replies, sent on request. On railway journeys to Glasgow, it was a thrill to buy 4d. Magazines at Smith's: Picture Post, Illustrated, and Everybody's. But the very wet and mild Scottish winters were a time to recover and start preparing for the next year's visitors. Spring and Summer were action packed.

As for reading in adolescence, I owe everything to my schooling. And when I saw a photograph of Anna Neale in the introduction to my copy of As You Like It, acting in the Open Air Theatre at Regents Park, and read that the English, in Tudor times, stood round after dinner singing madrigals together, I thought to myself: that's the place for me! What a contrast to grim Presbyterian Scotland with its grey skies, its rain, its frugality, its hellfire and brimstone. Another key influence from my educational experience was the link I made with my very own secret garden, formed by the woodlands and the overgrown orchard, both planted by Victorian gardeners behind the house, with their crumbling walls and stone steps, its magnificent line of chestnut trees, shaken by the winds of autumn and winter, in Spring, filled with primroses and bluebells, to the delight of my brother and myself. So, in school, when we got to Wordsworth, the English Nature poet, and the Romantics: Keats and Shelley, I was bowled over. And I felt I shared their joy in the beauties of the natural world..

After the 6th form, I started looking round for job opportunities, I discovered that the Civil Service had an Open Competition for recruits. I sat the exams, had an interview and got myself a job with the old MANI. Cheap hostel accommodation was provided in South Kensington, and shortly after I arrived, I joined a small Library near my Queens Gate address, but I have to say that although I did take books out from time to time, I was much more interested in the Arts in London. For example, in half an hour, I could be sitting in the gallery at Covent Garden watching Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somas, On the 30 bus I could get to Sadlers Wells and even more ballet. As for the galleries and museums, the latter reached on foot: there was an exhibition devoted to Anna Pavlova at Kensington Palace. As for the Evening Classes! I went to Morley College and took some books out of their Library. The more classes you attended and the longer you attended the College, the cheaper it got! Our ballet teacher, Mrs Barbara Moore, had danced with Pavlova's company.

And being an intrepid cyclist, I actually cycled round Marble Arch on my way to Regent's Park, and that Open Air theatre, through Richmond Park to Hampton Court Palace. No time for books – so much to do. So much to see. I loved it. But I fell in love with the now unfashionable English canon, created by my forefathers, which offered such a stimulus to the imagination, I remain devoted to it.

Teenage Reading

My early teenage reading was definitely a means of escape from household chores and working on the family market garden. The girls in Enid Blyton's Secret Seven series had holidays with boys where they took the initiative in crime solving with very little supervision or interference from adults. Girls in the Malory Towers series played exotic games like lacrosse and being at boarding school they were always in the company of friends with whom they had wonderful adventures. In my later teenage years boys became more interesting and so copies of Jean Plaidy's historical novels became very popular and could be given as birthday presents on the basis they were widening our knowledge of history. The lurid cover of Forever Amber made it necessary to cover it with brown paper so that it looked like the rest of our textbooks.

Our school library had a copy of Madame Bovary by Flaubert and the ideas on adult behaviour were a revelation, for once in the sixth form we were encouraged to read widely. Birth control advice consisted in saying no. The consequences of ignoring this were pointed out and underlined by the number of girls who had given birth to babies fathered by the English and American soldiers stationed in our area during the war.

To read about a heroine who clearly had other ideas on such matters was a revelation and then to present her lover with a whip. Great speculation followed as to which lover used it or did they take turns? And indeed whereabouts was it administered.

The books we came to enjoy were those where the main characters faced difficulties and hardship but with ultimate success. Pip from Great Expectations, Jane from Jane Eyre and Oliver, all showed that one could succeed if one had determination, strength of character and a certain amount of good fortune in meeting the right people.

A more up to date lighter read was obtained from my mother's Woman's Own. My sister and I, rather than wait for each other to finish would read together about the scheming heroine in My Cousin Rachel and the humour in Beverly Nichols' column. Reading introduced us to so many characters which would never had the opportunity of meeting in our very beautiful but small village. **Marilyn Hawes**

As a teenager in Perth Western Australia in the 1960s, there was limited suitable fiction. Although there was an Australian press, I did not read much of it and a lot of our books came from England. In my day, you read children's books, like Enid Blyton, and then graduated in one huge step to the books your mother read. At least that is what I did. We spent long Christmas summer holiday afternoons lying on the bed reading. One big book of my mother's I read was Gone With The Wind. This was when I was quite young and I am sure I didn't understand it. My mother was a subscriber to Reader's Digest and used to buy the abridged volumes of novels which made great holiday reading at our hired beach house. One of the best bits about the time there were the afternoon reading sessions.

Tom Sawyer and Treasure Island were hard to read as they were written in dialect and this rather put me off, but Mum sometimes read these to me, probably before I was a teenager.

At school the library was for the big girls and full of really dull looking non-fiction. I don't think I ever went into that library to choose a book. The Fremantle Library, which was situated in the less salubrious end of town, had a good selection for the time, and there was a children's section upstairs, but I think this came later. I remember getting books from the adult section and feeling a bit nervous and grown up.

Mum went to town by bus every Friday to shop at Charlie Carter the supermarket, and brought home a small white paper bag with coloured boiled sweets, shaped like fish, and covered in sugar, and she also brought home The Australian Women's Weekly. We enjoyed the articles in this and also it was famous for its recipes. I never read the fiction and neither did my mother. She much preferred novels. There were a lot of English magazines in the newsagents, out of date, because they had come by sea. Our newspaper was The West Australian, thrown onto the lawn outside the house by the paperboy driving past in his car. No, he didn't get out of the car, he flung it whilst driving! Too bad if the weather was wet, the paper got soaked. Many of the reports in The West Australian came from Reuters and other foreign news agencies.

At school we did Dickens' Hard Times, Shakespeare's Hamlet, The Pied Piper by Nevil Shute, Greenmantle by John Buchan and Northanger Abbey by Jane Austen. None of these really grabbed me; I don't think they were particularly well taught, but I loved going to the New Fortune Theatre at the University to see Hamlet. Later I read Shute's On The Beach and found the ideas and story shocking.

We had comics, from an unknown source, of the classics such as, The Man in the Iron Mask and The Count of Monte Cristo. I think these were serialised and probably I never read the whole story. I remember feeling a bit strange about them as I suppose comics were not really approved of.

When I was studying at school and college I had little time to read novels as we had homework and I was expected to study in my room at my desk, every evening.

Often you get the story of a book from other sources such as radio readings and films. Certainly I knew the plots of many books that I hadn't read. Of course there is much more, such as the historical novels of Jean Plaidy, the Philippa Gregory of the time. One especially intriguing book was The Third Eye by Lobsang Rampa, about Tibet and perhaps an early example of the New Age genre. In fact it was written by an Englishman, but certainly a fascinating story from 1958. **Rhonda Anderson**

At the age of 15, in 1968, I remember working my way through Jean Plaidy's historical novels with names such as *Gay Lord Robert*, *Royal Road to Fotheringay* and *Madame Serpent*. I was fond of reading about the lives of Ann Boleyn, Mary Queen of Scots, Marie Antoinette et al.; my older sister was keen on the Regency novels of Georgette Heyer such as *Bath Tangle*, *These Old Shades* and *Powder and Patch*. Encouraged by the fashion for black and white BBC adaptations on Sunday afternoons, it was not long before I was leafing through *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, *David Copperfield*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *North and South*, not to mention Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga*. The only Hardy and Eliot novels I read while still at school were *Far From the Madding Crowd* and *Silas Marner* - others came later. I always preferred reading romance to science fiction or detective novels and Daphne Du Maurier was a great favourite. I re-read *Rebecca* many times and enjoyed *The House on the Strand*. *I Capture the Castle* and *Cider With Rosie* were great discoveries I still enjoy re-reading while George Orwell, H.E. Bates and Miss Read kept my feet on the ground. I enjoyed short stories and novellas like *The Snow Goose*, *Gigi*, *The Owl Service*, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, yet loved my mother's wartime copy of *Gone With the Wind*, though I haven't read it since. I read Albert Camus, Françoise Sagan, Edna O'Brien and Margaret Drabble. I re-read *A Summer Birdcage* many times. I too had an older sister, wanted to live in Paris, to visit Florence and have a friend like Simone. It was a chatty, accessible novel, one of my favourite early easy reads. I then went on to read her other early novels but not the later ones. One book that surfaced during this era of peace and love was *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*: obligatory reading for the Woodstock generation. I was very influenced by songs by Joni Mitchell, Judy Collins, Simon and Garfunkel. Joan Baez sang of myths and legends; Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen were poets.

By the time I started studying for A levels I was a serious bookworm. Not only the English texts but French ones too were a big influence. I fell headlong in love with *Le Grand Meaulnes* by Henri Alain-Fournier. Only recently, having visited all the places in Central France associated with the novel, have I laid that particular ghost to rest.

I would like to say I discovered Virginia Woolf, Iris Murdoch, Nancy Mitford and Elizabeth Bowen during my early teenage years but they came later along with *Madame Bovary*, *Therese Raquin* and *Anna Karenina*. I realise that, as a teenager, I read, and continue to read, for pure escapism: a natural progression from the fairy tales and picture books I loved in childhood, from *Ballet Shoes* by Noel Streatfeild and *The Children of Green Knowe*. 'There is no frigate like a book to take us lands away,' wrote Emily Dickinson. In that respect, we are all teenagers at heart. **Penny Freeston**

The Rockery

Some years ago we built a rockery in the garden. When it was planted with our chosen alpines and bulbs we were pleased with it but thereafter when we were out and about we would suddenly say 'wouldn't that stone look nice on the rockery' and if the stone didn't obviously belong to anyone, we would take it home.

The habit grew and less attractive rocks would be replaced by nicer ones. The children would give us special rocks for presents and souvenirs from holidays would always be a stone rather than a bought knick-knack.

Planted round with yellow crocuses is a whitish stone scooped into my holiday beach bag a short distance from the Acropolis, taken from a place much walked over by tourists and definitely NOT broken off from any structure. I also took away a sense of guilt, slightly appeased by a visit to the Elgin Marbles in the British Museum. In the loft still is the suitcase with a hole made when the weight plummeted it from a height onto the airport carousel.

There is a small green rock from Mount Teide in the Canaries and I still get a sense of the heat as I picked it out of the sand and remember the breathtaking cold at the top as we stepped out of the cable car.

Some beautiful grey smooth cobbles recall a visit to Dylan Thomas's cabin at Laugharne and similarly tactile honey coloured stones remind us of a clear Cornish day with the wind blowing across the golf links to St. Enodoc and the ornate gravestone of John Betjeman.

In Prague, a car colliding with a bollard loosened dozens of small, square pieces of granite which now set off a small pink Hebe.

I have the distinct feeling that all this is very un-PC but when I consider the destruction and chaos both in cities and the country our footsteps have been very light. **Eileen Ward**

Afghanistan

Nobody wins in Afghanistan,
From Russia back to Genghis Khan,
It was ruled for a while by the Taliban,
But, nobody wins in Afghanistan.

In Afghanistan there are mountains galore,
With valleys and villages by the score.
The villages there have tribal law;
It's been that way since the days of yore.

But President Bush and Tony Blair,
For history, don't seem to care,
They sent our boys to join in strife,
Endangering many a young man's life.

The pride of our youth was sent to fight,
Whether the cause was wrong or right,
To fight in a war which knew no rules,
Often armed with inadequate tools.

Who was the enemy? Who was your friend?
Is a suicide bomber just round the bend?
The man sheltering in a shack,
Is he waiting to shoot you in the back?

As you move down a country road,
Is there a bomb ready to explode?
A bomb that's buried out of sight
By a ghostly figure in the night.

To defuse those bombs you must be bold
And display a depth of courage untold.
A little mistake, a tiny blip,
A mighty blast as the fuse you flip.

Life is often so unkind,
No arms, no legs and sometimes blind.
Rehabilitation, often fraught,
Depend on the skills at Headley Court.

The wounded live a life of grief,
For mental stress there's no relief.
Scarred with the horrors of battles scenes,
Tormented with horrific dreams.

Coffins draped with the Union Jack,
Carrying the lifeless bodies back.
Through Wootton Bassett the cortege flows.
The list of mourners grows and grows.

When will this senseless struggle cease?
When, at last, will we have peace?
Young lives must not be lost in war;
A war in which we ask, 'What for?'

Fred Vincent

Scrooge!

Scrooge has retreated through a Dickensian door
burnt candlelight dims on dark ceiling and floor
the Church has proclaimed the news of His birth
deaf ears are blocked up like dense snow on the earth

Cinderella waltzes at her first golden ball
whilst credit cards cry via a hole-in-the-wall
The gifts have been opened; the arguments cease
and false expectations of love, joy and peace.

Christmas tree lights slowly 'pop' in the dark
Extinguished by greed as the angels sing "HARK!"
Santas retreat in red cloaks stained in soot
As bitter winds bite the thick frost underfoot

Bells have resounded to that first silent night
more sonorous tones echo Man's hopeless fight
Murky mists murder the truth of this Gift
Like Scrooges all snared in an icy snowdrift.

Balloons have all burst for the dream is concealed
But: who knows NEXT year it will all be revealed?
As prickly pine-needles stick to the floor
Scrooge cries, "**BAH HUMBUG!**" from a Dickensian door.

Judy Studd

Tumbler

Momentum, gallop, gathered pace
A homing, wing-like glide, afloat,
Full seconds five the tumbler raced
Down fourteen steps at breakneck speed.

Sprawled out, knocked out, blood pouring out
From spectacles-inflicted wound.
Good people's hands and brains at work
To meet his needs and summon help

Professional and expert skill
From paramedic, doctor, nurse
Applied with humour, warmth and care.
While in and out of consciousness
The tumbler drifted, wondering why?

And how? And what? What had he done?
Two more mishaps, and slow but sure
Questions softened, light spread abroad:
Accept, embrace the changing scene.

Yes, life is different - that's for sure
But over, finished, cast aside?
Just wait upon the Lord for strength
In gratitude be calm and clear
And listen, heed the still, small voice.

Michael Wetton

Time Sonnet

The Bible says - there is a time to get,
A time to lose, a time to love, a time
To hate. It does not say time to forget
Or even to remember other times.
So should we think of sadness that has gone
Or should we let it pass into the dust?
Should we remember how the sun has shone,
Or simply let it go, as go it must?
We recognise the bad times; they arrive
To follow us around like shadows dark...
Attached to us they dominate our lives -
No matter what we do, they leave their mark.

But what we must best do, as years advance,
Is know to celebrate - our time to dance.

Jean Medcalf

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