

~~~~~  
Ianthe's alt.sex.intergen 'Poems of the Week'.      Number 31.  
28th October 1995.  
~~~~~

This week's theme, following on from last week's 'Singing' theme, is the way in which we find our desires made literally UNSPEAKABLE. Of these poems, only the last one is known to have been written by a child-lover - but I think all these poems tell us something about our lives, and the way our feelings have been negated and our love has been forced to become a "love that dare not speak its name".

- 
- \* Edwin Muir (Scotland, 1887-1959) 'In Love For Long'.
  - \* James Kirkup (England, Born 1923) 'Waiting'.
  - \* Paavo Haavikko (Finland, Born 1931) 'The Winter Palace'.
  - \* Jan Hanlo (The Netherlands, 1912-1969) 'New Blackbirds'.
- 

Muir was a poet and novelist. Kirkup is a poet and travel writer. It was his poem which provoked the 1977 UK prosecution of Gay News for 'blasphemous libel' (the editor was found guilty and sentenced to prison). Information about Hanlo can be found in: Hafkamp, Hans. Time of Youth, Time of Beauty - the poet Jan Hanlo (1912-1969) Paidika - journal of paedophilia, Winter 1994 (11), Vol 3, No. 3. (Pages 34-60. ISSN 0167-5907).

-----

### IN LOVE FOR LONG

I've been in love for long  
With what I cannot tell  
And will contrive a song  
For the intangible  
That has no mould or shape,  
From which there's no escape.

It is not even a name,  
Yet is all constancy;  
Tried or untried, the same,  
It cannot part from me;  
A breath, yet as still  
As the established hill.

It is not anything,  
And yet all being is;  
Being, being, being,  
Its burden and its bliss.  
How can I ever prove  
what it is I love ?

This happy happy love  
Is sieged with crying sorrows,  
Crushed beneath and above  
Between todays and morrows;  
A little paradise  
Held in the world's vice.

And there it is content  
As careless as a child,  
And in imprisonment  
Flourishes sweet and wild;  
In wrong, beyond wrong,  
All the world's day long.

This love a moment known  
For what I cannot know  
And in a happy moment gone  
Is like the happy doe  
That keeps its perfect laws  
Between the tiger's paws  
And vindicates its cause.

Edwin Muir.

---

WAITING

I wait with a pencil in my hand  
Beside the morning's empty page,  
Not hoping for a sign, but waiting  
For a word that will engage  
The stillness with a sound  
Of its own making.

Outside the paper room  
The children in the playground kill  
The summer with their cries.  
I look out at the sunny hill  
Of sky, but cannot catch the words they scream  
To give their spirits ease.

If I, too, could give a shout  
Of fear or pleasure, I could play  
Myself into their endless game.  
But I stand outside their day.  
The dumb words are fastened in my throat,  
And will not come.

James Kirkup.

-----

THE WINTER PALACE: THE FIFTH POEM

A beautiful child sat playing in the sand  
And finger-writing:

Who ? Where from ? Where to ?

I answered,

O beautiful child, tell me, is...

Interrupting me:

I am two children, hand in hand,

I wanted to know:

O beautiful child who finds it so easy to talk,  
tell me, where does the grass-tree grow,  
where does the grass flower,  
the wind and the breath of the wind,  
the strawberry, the leaf of grass, the rose ?

Again, it broke in:

I am not at one with myself,  
I am full of contraries,  
I talk about anything, I am boy and girl,  
one and two,  
and you, are you night and day ?

I said:

I want to go back where I was born,  
I want to be silent, there.

O syntax, that has few exceptions.  
You, slyness of sincerity,  
you rule.

It shouted:

Why are you praising the language that rules ?

And I:

I can't get rid of it,  
this breath that has grown trees...  
I took the road through the forest,  
but oh, it was stormy weather,  
angry autumn weather...

That child then said:

But first you have to calm down the wind,  
the walking wind, the dense tree-growing wind!

But, if it gives way  
why shouldn't you try to be free,  
to walk through the night and look for a beautiful child  
whom it would fit,  
that uninhabited breath ?

Paavo Haavikko.

-----  
And to end on a slightly less depressing, but still  
related, note...  
-----

NEW BLACKBIRDS - For A.M.

There was a man  
who at every stanza  
that he heard from  
the blackbird  
said  
darling darling  
and there came again  
new blackbirds blackbirds.  
And with every boy  
that he saw on a  
bicycle or walking  
he thought  
and said  
beauty beauty.  
And that man  
is myself.

Jan Hanlo.

-----  
-----  
ianthe@duende.demon.co.uk  
-----

ends.

