

Two Poems by Heather Lyons

Coming Home

Saturdays

No one said why you had to go
there were no words anyway
the world had been at war
in your land the fighting continued
we had to go home and
so did you.
Sometimes now in an ordinary English town
Saturdays feel like this. . . .
a small child, elephants embroidered round the hem of her dress,
trying to make sense of a life made gone.

Lost on Board Ship

I don't think I was actually lost.
Small, solemn and determined
I think I was looking for you.
The story told so often since:
a crackling announcement over the tannoy
taking tea with the captain on the bridge.
Perhaps it was only later
I realised that I would not find you
and
that you would not come looking for me.

Dunloghaire

In the photograph you notice the hats first:
a stylish grey pillbox worn at an angle
a home knitted beret, probably green
a wide-brimmed trilby in brown velour
and a dark pink bonnet with velvet trim.
I somehow know the colours
although the photograph is, of course, black and white.
It was 1951
February
and, he remembers, very cold.

Epidavros

Broken by your leaving
anguished (though I did not know it then)
by a distant wordless grief,
an unknown subterranean stream
infusing the fragile structures of a life,
I stood stricken in the supermarket
felled by all the things I didn't need to buy.
(I watched and waited and you did not come.)

Beyond all this,
in part, of course, because of it,
(though I did not know it then)
I am become ancient pilgrim.
Alone in hot pine shade among arid hills and broken stone,
centuries stirring
summoned by mystery
unaccountably stilled by this silent lucid space.

For another of Heather's poems, see page 47.

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Invigilation

Outside the wind darkens and squalls
scatters rain stones on sheet glass.
In here time stretches out
smooth and implacable.

Naturally they won't all stay the course.
Concentration like time dulls
grows blurred and fleet
warps and buckles
above the wail of urban sirens
the rise and fall of traffic tide
and the strange inexplicable sounds of the building itself
groans bangs creaks and the pipes singing.

Only one remains as winter twilight fades
long dark red hair, pale puzzled frown
one leg pumping endlessly
powering mind and hand
the words spilling bravely onto the page until
finally
I break the silence.

Heather Lyons is a committee member of the TMS. She lives on the south coast and spends some time each year in silence and solitude in the Scottish highlands.