

DIASPORIC LITERATURE

2 OCTOBER, 2010 | CREATED USING FIVEFILTERS.ORG

Epilogue

Sep 29, 2010 01:50AM

Dimitris Tsaloumas

My joys are those of spare autumn birds
that haunt the trees of sunset cities.

My sadness is in the patient eye of the ox,
the vast lament of the ass in night paddocks.

I claw and peck and bristle at competition
like a pink-stalked gull, and my greed

is infinite, though I loathe my brother the pig.
My lust is the lust of the goat who spies

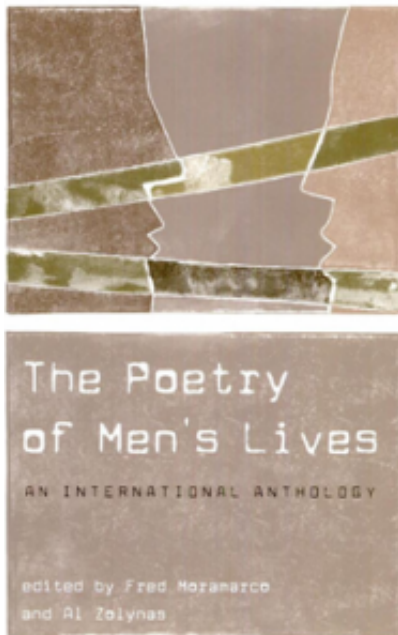
the bare-breasted tourist on the rock
and shakes his beard with rage and climbs

down the bluff to take a sniff at the brine.
Only my thoughts are human, but I look

for alternatives. They bring me too close
to you, old friends; my perspective suffers.

© **Dimitris Tsaloumas**

"The poetry of men's lives: an international anthology"
edited by Fred Maramarco
and Al Zolynas
University of Georgia Press, 2004



Copyright protected by Digiprove © 2010

.....

Related Posts:

- Photographia
- 6. Γιώργος Καναράκης: Ο φιλόλογος
- 8. Γιώργος Καναράκης: ο γλωσσολόγος
- Helen
- 7. Γιώργος Καναράκης: ο ιστοριογράφος



The Oratory

Sep 24, 2010 05:29AM

By Gabrielle Morgan

After years of yearning to see England, I had at last arrived in London. My great grandparents had emigrated from England to Australia in the 1850's, so I felt a strong connection and was eager to investigate the marvels of that immense city.

I set out on foot from Earl's Court, where I was staying, and headed for the famed Harrods Department Store in Kensington. A gleaming Rolls Royce graced one of the windows close to the Royal Patronage emblem on the side of the building, undoubtedly setting a tone of affluence and distinction. I was excited to see the interior of such a renowned and exclusive store.

I wasn't disappointed. I roamed around various departments and was tempted by the outstanding selection of goods displayed for the much wealthier than I. The décor was created to captivate the emotions and indeed lure to buy. Not to be outdone by the status of my surrounds, I ordered coffee from the gourmet food hall before I set out to walk down the Brompton Road.

It was the middle of the afternoon and I was tired but determined to keep going and not miss any aspect of London life. As I walked along, I noticed a large, impressive, church building with an Italianate façade complete with columns and high dome at the rear. A sign informed me it was the 'London Oratory, Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, built in 1880 - 1884'.

I went into the church and immediately became aware of a tangible reverence, the stillness only interrupted by the people who quietly walked through, all intent on seeking prayerful solace.

A Mass was in progress in front of the High Altar. I joined the congregation and from my seat in a pew marvelled at all I could see. Candles flickered in shining gold candelabra illuminating the richness of the religious masterpiece above them. The priest wore a green chasuble, regulated by the feast of the day, as he solemnly celebrated the Liturgy in its original Latin form. There was an enormous chapel to the right of the High Altar decorated with huge vases of fresh English flowers. The sculptured

Madonna and Child traditionally vested in Cope and Crown indicated it was The Lady Chapel. To the left of where I was sitting was the St. Philip Altar in front of which lay a wax effigy of St. Philip of Neri dressed in his Eucharistic vestments.

The sweet smell of incense permeated the air as I followed behind a queue of people moving slowly down the red and ochre carpet to receive the body of Christ in communion. The choir sang a Gregorian chant, and I had reached a somewhat symbiotic state of bliss. I was no longer in the secular world of Harrods, but dwelt in the spirit of the sublime.

After the Mass, I walked around the church investigating the other magnificent altars dedicated to the Saints of the Church. The simplest being the Calvary Altar, where above a lone prayer table hung a superbly carved wooden crucifix. The St. Wilfred Chapel contained the altar of the English martyrs and the only known religious painting by Rex Whistler. I noted the large marble altar in the Lady Chapel had originally been in the Dominican Church in Brescia, Italy and the St. Patrick's Chapel was decorated with Wood panels painted in 1517-70 by the Flemish painter Frans Floris.

I went on to ponder the wonder of the Chapels of St. Mary Magdalene, St. Joseph, The Sacred Heart, St. Sebastian and the Seven Dolours Chapel with a black and white study of Our Lady of Sorrows. The paintings and statuary in these chapels were breathtaking and small lighted candles indicated the devoted who had prayed before them.

By the time I left the Oratory I was overwhelmed with the impact the visit had made upon me and before I left London I was to be drawn back to experience these emotions three more times.

I wondered at myself devoting so much of my valuable time revisiting the same place when I could have explored so much more of London. Somehow the atmosphere in that Church answered all my needs. I was lifted out of the secular into the divine. Harrods with its enticing array of goods was merely a mirage compared to the wealth of inspiration I found at the Oratory.

I later discovered The Oratory is the second largest Catholic Church in London and is home to the priests of "The Congregation of The Oratory of St. Philip Neri," or as they are often referred to as, the "Oratarians."

The Church is dedicated to the memory of St. Philip Neri, a zealous priest, ordained in Rome in 1551. Philip believed that music had the power to uplift the spirit to the divine and to that end he gathered together a small group of laymen for worship introducing them to the love of melody and song. The Italians used the word "Oratory" to describe these gatherings. The numbers grew to such an extent that Pope Gregory XIII gave him and his followers the Church of Santa Maria in Vallicella which later became Chiesa Nuova. Then Philip formed "The Congregation of the Oratory" with a group of priests and brothers. The Oratory became one of Rome's famous centres for sacred music. Some of the greatest musicians of the time gained inspiration and musical opportunities from the Roman Oratory. And to this day the "Oratarians" continue the tradition of St. Philip of Neri with serious devotion to worship and song.

There could be nothing finer than hearing Palestrina, Mozart and Bach echo through your heart within the walls of the London

Oratory. Glory Be to God!

© *Gabrielle Morgan*

.....

Related Posts:

- That Day...
- MUSING ABOUT ART
- George - A happening on an Australian beach
- A Visit to Mykonos
- On His Departure

That Day...

Sep 19, 2010 06:28AM

By Gabrielle Morgan

Often a day can be quite remarkable. That day for me was the day I went in search of the village of my ancestors.

I was alone in England, my first visit away from Australia, when I set out from London by train for Penzance, the southern most point in Cornwall. It was a seaside resort where quaint old granite stone houses have been withstanding the Atlantic gales for centuries. The old buildings and mysterious alleyways in the town were a reminder of the smuggling and plundering which had gone on there centuries before. It was easy to visualise those earlier times and sense the hardship people must have suffered.

The Benedictine monks had built a priory in the twelfth century on a small offshore island, now known as St. Michael's Mount. It later became a castle and was the scene of many military sieges. A boat took me out to the Mount where I braced myself against the strong wind to climb the steps to the door of the castle. Looking back to the mainland, where all the small stone cottages from previous centuries still remained, I was transported in time and once inside the castle, I was completely entranced by the history within its walls.

The antiquity of Penzance enthralled me and I was tempted to stay longer, but the day arrived for me to investigate 'Luxulyan,' the small village where I believed my ancestors originated from. At home in Australia, I had studied this spot on a map and was intrigued to find out what it would look like in reality. So, I packed my suitcase to leave the B. & B. where I was staying and after a lengthy chat with the proprietor who provided me with a vivid picture of Cornish life over the preceding few hundred years, I departed Penzance by train.

To negotiate my journey to Luxulyan involved three train connections, and as it was the weekend, a wait of two hours at St. Austell station between trains. However, not to be put off by the look of amazement on the Porter's face when I told him my destination was 'Luxulyan' or by his comment,

"What are you going there for? There's nothing of interest there."

I proceeded on.

I had intended to make a return journey to St. Austell in one day, but due to the long wait between connections this idea now

seemed unlikely, so I enlisted the help of a kindly girl in the bus depot outside the station. I told her I wanted to visit the town of my ancestors and would like to find accommodation for the weekend. After three phone calls to establishments that were all booked out, she managed to secure accommodation at a B. & B. said to be situated at the top of a hill overlooking the town.

Eventually, after a seemingly endless wait, I was seated in a two carriage train which wound through the magical woods of Luxulyan Valley. If Robin Hood had popped out I wouldn't have been the least bit surprised.

When the train pulled into Luxulyan, I struggled out of the carriage with my suitcase and dragged it along the gravel platform. Remembering the Porter's words, I was relieved and agreeably surprised to see some quaint stone cottages across the road from the station. A taxi was already waiting for me. The driver, a very pleasant English woman, chatted easily as we drove into the village along the most picturesque street I had ever seen. The cab wound around past the old village pub and along a hedged lane which stretched up a hill to the gate of the B. & B. where it stopped. I stared at the charming two story granite stone house before me. It was situated in an extraordinarily beautiful countryside where cows and sheep grazed peacefully in the hedged meadows sloped against the hillside. I couldn't believe my eyes.

"Are you sure this is the place?" I asked the taxi driver. "There is a notice on the gate; it says, Christian Retreat Centre."

"Yes, this is it. They take in B. & B. guests too," she answered cheerfully.

At that moment, the owner of all we surveyed appeared at the gate. He was a charmingly polite Englishman who introduced himself as Robin. After he picked up my suitcase, he ushered me into an adjoining modern house on the property which was designed to be in complete harmony with the original thirteenth century stone farmhouse where he lived with his wife. This new house I was to have entirely to myself. It was furnished completely to my taste and had a glassed in sitting room overlooking the valley.

Robin told me he had invited a lady named Constance Rowe to meet me and that she may throw some light on the whereabouts of my ancestors' graves. While I settled into my new surrounds he went to fetch a tray of tea and home make cake for me to share with Constance. The lady duly arrived and I found her to be an extremely interesting and pleasant person. As we sipped tea together, she told me her husband was a history professor who had published a book two inches thick on the history of Cornwall. We enjoyed each others company so much I felt sad when she had to leave but was buoyed by her offer to drive me to the church grounds on her way home.

We wandered around the church graveyard looking at headstones with inscriptions worn with age. I had almost given up hope of finding a Treleaven ancestor buried there, when I suddenly came across an old stone with the inscription, "Mordecai Treleaven of this Parish who died March 9th, 1887, aged 60 years. His end was peace."

I was elated. I had found a Treleaven grave in an idyllic setting, right under an oak tree in the prettiest spot in the world, beside the parish church of St. Cyriac and St. Julitta, built in the

1500's. In that churchyard, I experienced a familiar closeness to my surrounds hard to describe, rather as if I had been there before in my deeper subconscious. I belonged, connected to the soil, the freshness of the air, the oak trees and the solidity of the aged stone buildings of Luxulyan. I realised that without knowing it, I had always sought to replicate that special sense of place in the country areas I had chosen to live in Australia.

I reluctantly left Mordecai and walked past the high stone wall of the vicarage and headed up the steep hill to my temporary home. The hedged road was only wide enough to take one modern day car. On the way I passed a two storey stone house that Constance had pointed out to me as being the oldest house in Luxulyan. I decided to go in to ask if the resident might happen to have known the Treleaven family descendants. To walk into a stranger's house was not something I would ordinarily have done, but as my stay was to be short I felt compelled to do this.

I followed the pathway leading to the back of the house and peered through a window in passing. An old lady sat alone at a wooden table sipping a plate of soup. I hesitated, not wanting to disturb her, but continued on past a beehive to arrive at the back door. When I knocked the old lady opened the door and welcomed me in after I explained I was an Australian visitor. Inside the house I felt as though I had gone back into a time capsule of the past. The only evidence of modern day living in the sparsely furnished room was the family photographs of her children who had long since migrated to America. The lady was very friendly and enjoyed talking about life in Luxulyan, but didn't have any knowledge of the Treleaven family. I was surprised about this as Constance had told me there was a "Treleaven Farm" in Luxulyan to this day. After I left the lady's house, I felt I had experienced a very special glimpse into a life still untouched by modern day concerns.

On my return to my new found paradise, Robin's wife, Maggie, had prepared dinner in the main house equal to any meal you would be served in the grandest hotel in England. It was presented with great delicacy and taste. In conversation, I discovered their Retreat Centre was the result of their passion to provide a home for people seeking Christian Fellowship and prayer; a haven for people needing a break from mainstream living, where they would find solace and peace in a homely and loving atmosphere.

As I lay in bed that night covered by a pretty pink flowered doona in the cosiest, prettiest room I had ever been in, I knew it had been worth while to cross the world from Australia to be there. I smiled to myself as I thought of the words of the train Porter; he obviously hadn't discovered my nirvana.

The following morning was pouring with rain, but the view through the wide expanse of glass windows in the sitting room was unsullied. Somehow, the heavy mist enhanced the picture post card scene of black and white cows grazing in the green hedged meadows. Robin appeared to advise me that breakfast would be served in the main house. I was speechless when I saw the presentation before me. Every kind of breakfast food, followed by eggs and bacon, toast and coffee, all amazingly presented with a perfection rarely encountered.

Despite the rain, Robin was delighted to drive me to Lanlivery, the next town, where we visited the Church of St. Brevita. There,

under the flagstones inside the church lay the graves of the Treleavens. The Treleaven name was also inscribed on the church bell.

My excitement was great, to actually be in the very church where they had worshipped so long ago. To feel the atmosphere and space that was their world cannot be described, except to say, I felt a new comprehension and sense of the importance of their lives. They were now entwined with mine, their purpose somehow linked with mine.

I will go back one day to my hamlet of heaven.

© **Gabrielle Morgan**

.....

Related Posts:

- A Visit to Mykonos
- George - A happening on an Australian beach
- Distraught beyond Description
- The Oratory
- THE PIANIST



Literary Phrase Competition

Sep 10, 2010 02:02PM

- **Voting has now closed for this competition (18th September 2010, 09:30am EST) .**
- Voting results are shown below:

[contact-form]

.....

Related Posts:

- Literary Competition Australia
- Literary articles on the web
- Membership Agreement
- Epilogue
- Μελλοντικές επιδιώξεις - Future aims



To the Reader II

Sep 9, 2010 10:14AM

Dimitris Tsaloumas
(translated by Philip Grundy)

If when you walk through the mist you notice birds
- ablaze like pomegranates
in the window and on the bearded roof of winter,
- if sometimes the dark tunnels
let you out onto the balconies of the Amazon
- to see without fear flesh-eating leaves
swallowing alive the straying beams of the sun,
- and if your rights are trampled
or for your country's sake you're led away
- to gaol and see how blood sets fire
to the wilderness in the people's eyes,
- then know that you're indebted to me, that if you doff
the music I clothed you in, the shudder will crack you,
- the mists will flood you, and you'll perish.

© **Dimitris Tsaloumas**

The Observatory, p. 167
the original in Greek is here

.....

Related Posts:

- The Voice
- Στον Αναγνώστη Β'
- Epilogue
- Photographia
- Κάθισε φίλε

