

GODS WITH STAINLESS EARS

A Heroic Poem

1951

This Poem is
dedicated to
Dr Edith Sitwell

A glyweisti a gant Avaon
Vab Taliesin, gerdd gyfion,
Ni chel grudd gystudd calon.

Brân a gant chwedl ar uwchder
Derwen uwch deuffrwd aber,
Trech deall na grymusder.

Gwna y goreu ym mhob angen,
O'r peth fo'n dy berchen,
Gwell no dim gwasgawd brwynen.

CATTWG DDOETH A'I CANT

Preface

This poem was written over a period of two years, 1941–3. Not liking varied metre forms in a long poem, short-lipped lyrics interspersed with heavy marching strides, and not feeling too comfortable within the strict limits of the heroic couplet (wanting elbow room and breathing space), I decided to use the same structure throughout, changing only the rhythm, texture, and tone *internally*. The use of congested words, images, and certain hard metallic lines are introduced with deliberate emphasis to represent a period of muddled and intense thought which arose out of the first years of conflict, e.g. Factory hands and repetitive lines re-occur with the same movement as with a machine. For this I adapted the villanelle (see page [47]). Towards the third year of war, clear, cold, and austere sight is regained, and I have tried to control the stanzas in the fifth part of this poem under these conditions. The subject is universal, and the tragedy one of too many. Here I would add that my own, though part may be expressed, is outside the page.

The background is similar to any rural village: only the surface culture is superimposed or altogether distinct. The sentences at the end of the book are to pierce any obscurity which may arise owing to the isolation of localised folklore; or to make known the legends which belong to this particular part of the world.

Finally, when I wrote this poem, the scenes and visions ran before me like a newsreel. The galley sheets on which I wrote the first draft may be partly responsible for this occurrence. But the poem was written for filming, especially Part V, where the soldier and his girl walk in fourth dimension among the clouds and visit the various outer strata of our planet.

The Caravan
Laugharne
15th November 1949

LYNETTE ROBERTS

PART I

A synnasant oll, ac a ammheuasant, gan ddywedyd y naill wrth
y llall, Beth a all hyn fod?

Ac eraill, gan watwar, a ddywedasant, Llawn o win melus ydynt.

YR ACTAU. PENNOD II

ARGUMENT

The poem opens with a bay wild with birds and somewhat secluded from man. And it is in front, or within sight of this bay that the whole action takes place: merging from its natural state into a supernatural tension within the first six stanzas. War changes its contour. Machine-gun is suggested by the tapping of a woodpecker which gives out the identity of the gunner and provides his nationality, 'a dragon of wings'. Soldiers and armoured corps arrive: military parade and propaganda: factory workers and fatigues. The rural village described within view of this estuary where soldiers wander during the short hours of their leave. The gunners in action, and of one in particular. He, belonging to a Welsh regiment reading a bill by gunlight, and a letter from his girl in which she tells him they are to expect a child. Night falls, and with it comes the wrecking of a plane.

Today the same tide leans back, blue rinsing bay,
With new beaks scissoring the air, a care-away
Cadence of sight and sound, poets and men
Rediscovering them. Saline mud
Siltering, wet with marshpinks, fresh as lime stud

Whitening fields, gulls and stones attending them;
Curlews disputing coverts pipe back: stem
Plaintive legs deep in the ironing edge, that
Outshines the shale, a railway line washed flat,
Or tin splintered from a crab-green cave.

This is Saint Cadoc's Day. All this Saint Cadoc's
Estuary: and that bell tolling, Abbey paddock.
Sunk. – Sad as ancient monument of stone.
Trees veil, exhale cyprine shade, widowing
Homeric hills, green pinnacles of bone.

Escaping from these, tomb and cave, quagmires
Migrate; draw victim eyes with lustre sheen, suck
Confervoid residue from gillette veins: who talk
Now yield, calling others, those who walk
From Llanstephan, Llangain, and Llanybri.

No watereyes squinting or too near madness
Could fail such a trek. In this same old soddenness
In deep corridor graves culverts open; their
Gates kedged in mud, preening feathered air
Elucidating shapes flecked with woolglints

And small affiliated tares. – So walk swiftly by,
For today, *pridian*, tears ravens wings to grate
The bay, and John Roberts covered with ligustrum,
Always sanitary and discreet, rows to and fro from
Bell house to fennel, floating quietly on the tide.

In fear of fate, flying into land Orcadian birds pair
And peal away like praying hands; bare
Aluminium beak to clinic air; frame
Soldier lonely whistling in full corridor train,
Ishmaelites wailing through the windowpane,

O the cut of it, woe sharp on the day
Scaled in blood, the ten-toed woodpecker,
A dragon of wings 1 6 2 0 B 6
4 punctuates machine-gun from the quarry pits:
Soldiers, tanks, lorry make siege on the bay.

Freedom to boot. CONCLAMATION. COMPUNCTION.
Kom-pungk'-shun: discomforts of the mind deride
Their mood. Birds on the stirrups of the waterbride
Flush up, and out of time a tintinnabulation
Of voice and feather fall in and out of the ocean sky.

A sanctuary taken – trenched underfoot.
For today, today, the simple bay pined for
Out of reach. The atmospheric bogfoot
Out of season: culverts close their gate,
Machine sets against clay; irons a new uniform.

Trees crisp with Maeterlinck blue, screen
Submarine suns and baskets of bees: but
Men nettled with pie-powdered feet, angry
As rooks on their pernicky beds 'training
For another Cattraeth' said Evans shop.

DISSIMILAR. DISSUNDERED. CRANCH-CRAKE CRANCH-CRAKE
ASHIVER. ANHUNGERED ANHELATION.
CERAUNIC CLOUDS CRACK IN THEIR BRAIN.
Who was to be ring carrier for Jerrymandering
Gerontocracy. The officer yellow with argyria?

Soldiers seldom suffered from this; for silver
Scarcely smoothed their palm. CONGRIEVED. CONSTRAINED.
CONDEMNED. *Subversive* (?) for humanity blast this
And much else besides. Hell would chill a chitter
Chatter at the sight of their conflowing misery.

SHUN. *Father Precipice of Denbigh Rock,*
Mother Mild of Pembroke Streams, Have mercy on.
Cantation us to shoal deep winter.
Men fall to arms. Men stemmed to die
For the century. Then leap fast to the bone

Take wailing bayonets from the ice of wound.
Emblaze your handrails. Men fall to arms.
Men purred to fight – each other. So can we foresee
Death. Set each life against time. Jagged bitterns:
Gradgrinds all. – Now we ruined in life, bound

For detention in field, again build on lime
And rubble. To what age can this be compared?
Men slave, spit and spade. Glean life pure.
Accelerate oxidised roads. Drill new hearts and hearths.
Impale the money-goaders' palisade. And you

Of acetated minds, workers with xantheine
Faces, revolutionise your land; holding
The simple measures of life in your hand,
Remembering navies and peacocks never sail
Together in the aftermaths of disaster.

Into euclidian cubes grid air is planed.
Propellers scudding up grit and kerosene, braid
Hulls waled 5 miles hollow, spidering each man stark
On steelweb, hammering in rivets ambushade
Interrupted by sirens screaming tirade.

With machine-strength wearing blinkers and mask,
Will of iron moulding surface to brain chained:
While below in well shafts soldiers squat and cark,
Shell and peel pods and spuds: girders craned;
Into euclidian cubes tempered air is planed.

The brown paper parcels of sappers who ask,
Shelling and peeling: 'How's *Jane to-day*?' Barricade
Against blast and red-hot ingots; clatch
Of ricocheting wheels – hell's dim decade
Interrupted by sirens, screaming tirade.

Where each day ingrained is a chained task,
A clatter of clogs, winding of nerves: Fatigues
Thinning into vocal farms, war-limed grey,
Stately as battleships heeled to cove: there forced
Into euclidian cubes carol air is planed.

When daily the water trudge with battering can,
Striding out of snail from sprockets of kale;
Where tractors, carts like nasturiums crack
The windowpane; to rattle of boiling buckets,
Sleeve of plane rippling over hedge:

To each striped tidy plot aproned women work,
Spadeing clay and coal dust into 'pele' jet. To them
To iron bedsteads; kitchens farms cut open
With grates. To calico; village scintillating
Like mothball white on a hill: cresting cascades

And red rock, throwing out a shower of birds,
Woodcutters, and harrowing of gulls. Where
Women titans are weathervanes who fetch
In the cows who wander the valley prints
Greening the squares of their eyes. To men

Ploughing strig and stubble: near geese full of
White 'airs' crisping out their quills, whose
Eyes and ears surrounded with orange cord
Detect and hear the running pads of spiders;
Or better round the slow-slipping dairy-roof

Where rabbits hang punched on the door. To think
Of ceramic jugs glazed with the lead of years,
Brass and blue glisten under paraffin pools
By which everything rubied glows, baize and lace
Curtained to night; intrinsic to seal light

Crouched black on summer sills. Until the watersky
Of dawn flickers a sail-wash shimmering aquamarine
Into TB and disinhumed rooms; where past
Is not dead but comes uphot suddenly sharp as
Drakestone. To them soldiers return; offer chickweed

Love; others scribble the same formula home –
All this cover with blue dome of glass
And engrave the village Llanybri '42:
For OK saltates the cymric hearth and
BBC blaes from Bermondsey tongue.

Fine gentle ways fill time's Grave stone
From Stonehenge Blue to Granite's sharp Black.
Old women die folded in skirts, their culture
Entombed: upstarts mock at what was gracious before:
Work out their crudeness on to change and cloth.

Out of whalebone huts gunners drone: 'You,
With the gypsy slit on your ears Vaughan
What do you make of my lover' (!) No answer.
'Who's there in the Chapel Yard who bends?'
Prophets warm in the shade sign black signatures

In the Red Book of Hergest and cross their toes
To confuse the Principality. 'What's that withered
Field?' 'England.' 'Ah.' 'What's that purple pool
Of pansies lingering in so memorial
A town?' 'Culture of London.' 'Oh, so.'

'Pull down the bastard.' 'Pull down the flag.'
The flag torn down. Emerald on
Unfortunate field and red flaw its great
Perfection; without sound crept back like myth
Into folds of earth: grew greener shafts of resilience.

Under the washing line of blue. 'Who's
Speaking now?' 'Who's there in the Chapel Yard
Who bends?' 'Mari Ann is cleaning the graves.'
'Where's the "professor" he should know?' 'If the tide
Swept back for Saint Cadoc where was God

To smooth their corrugated mouths: strike a path
To the Laugharne Pubs?' 'Where's John Roberts,
Old Charon and his Coracle?' 'Who's there low
At the tide who blends?' 'Morgan the poacher,
Setting horsehair with broad bean and hook,

Sly old bugger snaring sheldrake. The State Trapper!
Breaming boots: bay full of spitshine and brass
Sun splintered on waves – cupping up –
Clear as beer sparkle... 'you've had it, mun'.
'Where's the "professor" he should know?'

He, who comes from Saint Cadoc's Chapter
Giant or Legendary Prince, who loves
One and no other, turns in his mind LEFT – RIGHT
LEFT – RIGHT, tapping boot wry in the dung
Coloured pool wonders which way and why?

Without chevron: yet born under that gyre
Astronomical sign: without chevron: kid
Crests his regimental badge. Poor callid
Cymru; unquestioning, unanswering,
Remaining just the same, braiding wire

With chilling hands, *stands*, under manorial
Showers, till the lurid sun spills across
The sky like a shot Indian. Then to read and relate
By gunlight indelible: '*We incarnate,*
Even if flesh rot you shall have Heaven,

How who then. Friend? Chine birds grip to black
Shining cliff, and wing, fowl-of-tar, to rift
In swivelling sea, cold hard as hand on rock:
Sea ride neither matched nor considered in flock.
Go down there far. Into groves of foreign

Glitter. On water mosaic of running tides,
Bitter with sweet birds, and unfortunate flesh; nothing
Fitter than avidity could return such mawkish
Litter. Go down there further and see the lucid
Plane-of-night, strained with piteous men

Drowned in water-swills of crossing waves; lifting
Asteroid heads, so alike, so different from
The petroleum sky: striking death too soon,
And nearer and sooner than they should: this dawn
Mauve as iron, whimpers as the biting jest.

PART II

Mawl i'r Haf

Tydi'r Haf, tad y rhyfig,
Tadwys coed brwysg caead brig,
Teg wdwart feistr tew goedallt,
Tŵr pawb wyd, tŵr pob allt.
Tydi a Bair, air wryd,
Didwn ben, dadeni byd.

I'r Alarch

Yr alarch ar ei wiwlyn,
Abid galch fal abad gwyn,
Llewych edn y lluwch ydwyd,
Lliw gŵr o nef, llawgrwn wyd...
Gorwyn wyd uwch geirw nant
Mewn crys o liw maen crisiant.
Dwbled fal mil o'r lili,
Wasgod teg, a wisgud ti.
Siecycd o ros gwyn it sydd,
A gown o flodau'r gwinwydd.
Cannaid ar adar ydwyd,
Ceiliog o nef, clog-wyn wyd.

DAFYDD AP GWILYM (c. 1325–85)

ARGUMENT

By the tidal lapping of the water a gramophone remains as the only symbol of a lost airman. The challenge arises to all people to discard their sorrow, break through destruction and outshine the sun. The flowers of the field contrast sharply with the clouding dispiritedness of the soldiers, whose sickness finally develops into gastric trouble and mental neurosis. The healing hand and images of home offered by the girl to her gunner.

We must upprise O my people. Though
Secretly trenched in sorrel, we must
Upshine, outshine the day's sun. And day
Intensified by the falling haggard
Of rain shall curve our smile with straw.

Bring plimsole plover to the tensile sand
And with cuprite crest and petulant feet
Distil our notes into febrile weeds
Crisply starched at the water-rail of tides:
On gault and green stone a gramophone stands,

In zebeline stripes strike out the pilotless
Age: from saxophone towns brass out the dead:
Disinter futility that we entombing men
Might curb our runaway hearts. –
On tamarisk; on seafield pools shivering

With water-cats, ring out the square slate notes
Shape the birdbox trees with neumes, wind sound
Singular into cool and simple corners
Round pale bittern grass and all unseen
Unknown places of sheltered rubble

Where whimbrels, redshanks, sandpipers ripple
For the wing of living. Under tin of earth,
From wooden boles where owls break music;
From this killing world against humanity
Uprise against, – outshine the day's sun.

Corymb of coriander: each ray frosted
Incandescent: by square stem held, hispid,
And purple spotted. Twice pinnate with fronds
Of chrome. Laid higher than the exulted hedge;
By pure collated disc of daisy glittering

White on a red powdered stem. By cusp of leaves
Held low to ground; this coriander cane,
Colonnade of angelica, chevril, fennel,
Parsley, aniseed, caraway, yarrow,
All kitchen's frescade culled and tied away;

By this eyelet and low fieldfare herbs are
Accentuated; engraved and brought to light:
To green cymes of guelder rose and flax blue
Meadows of Pembrey sedge. To men allergic,
Gunnars: Bogrush, Prickleledge, stinking Goosefoot,

Foetid Hawk's-beard, Black Horehound, Bloody-veined
Dock, Blue Broomrape, and Bastard Toadflax on dank
Plain of mud cough like Kerberous in midsummer lanes.
Food chyles constricted in their stomach,
Twisting, knotting, and deflexed, rats bolt

Between their teeth. All day the ghosts of ulcer
Hover in front of their paths. With unhealthy
Custom the MO turns a page, lays them aside,
Apart from communication, into pruned
Shuttered wards, curing each for the wrong event!

The MO turns a head. – Long necked in
Achillean sky, geese sleeve their own
Shadows through pools of air. Sailing downstream
Downfast to earth. Hydroplanes splash like
Zinnias on inrushing tides; fussy as moorhens

With tarnished back; whose legs of peeled elm
Trail scarlet garters into the shaking tips
Of reeds. To their aid. To his aid. To my lover.
Under tincture of Myddfai Hills, west of
Bristol glass, gold with bracken dust and black

Cattle motes and all chemical paradox:
XEBO 7011 camouflaged in naval oilskin
In all the gorgeous shades of Hades; –
By seiriol cat with greenfield eyes.
By kitchen rilled with distemper and grass.

By coat stained and saddlestitched by my flowering
Hands. By neighbours like Byzantine Waterspouts: leaning
Out of bedroom windows. By damn tin-blower.
Leaf feathers of the white-eyed woodpecker
Spangled with lime leaves, wearing the

Chuckling red hat! By 7. With magic and craft
To heel. Without abbreviation or contraction
Take thou my lover 4 pints from the 'Farmers' Arms'
Or, if flat, 6 glass tankards from Jones
'Black Horse'. Not supplying either sip homeward

Sloe-gin from Merlin's desk or board 'Cow and Gate'
Lorry. Up to Carmarthen: to the wine merchant'; mention
Vicar's name, demand whiskey 'Old Parr',
Mix. Let a mixture be made. Let him my lover
Take one silver tablespoonful out of IN

A little water each fourth hour and the
Acridity of his mind shall be as the crimson
Heart on our fresco wall. – To perfect eyestrain
For your wedgwood eyes, collyrium of well water
From the Ffyn-on-ol-bri springs.

PART III

Ystyriwch eich ffyrdd. Hauasoch lawer, a chludasoch ychydig;
bwytta yr ydych, ond nid hyd ddigon; yfed, ac nid hyd fod yn
ddiwall; ymwisgasoch, ac nid hyd glydwr i neb; a'r hwn a ennilllo
gyflog, sydd yn casglu cyflog i gôd dylog. Fel hyn y dywed
ARGLWYDD y lluoedd;

Ystyriwch eich ffyrdd.

LLYFR HAGGAI. PENNOD I

ARGUMENT

The bay crystallised. Soldiers washing by the light of the moon. Swansea raid and prayer to Parliament. The gunner standing apart, through maladjustment of mind and spirit rejecting his girl. Woefully and with pained frustration. Of their love: wholesome cottage: his departure abroad. Misunderstanding and unhappiness of both.

Embrowns himmel hokushai. Manure seeps
In long rags, pavilions hut, camouflages
Arsenical veins with a sprouting
Febrifuge and serial of death; heaves a
Heavier heart of sedimentary hate.

Washing like flies to pin of elbow, soldiers
Under ciliated moon shake off floatings
Of soap; strike code on oxidised zinc; polish
Bayonets clean as the cut of the moon to
Sharpen inactivity. Spark electric cells

Of air into a prism of light as they
Shoulder the blades on parade. A shark wind teethes,
Strips fields; striating black fullstops under hedge;
Belying-white trees as they stand caustic
And chagrin. Like paleozoic sentinels, stretched high

Above skeleton hills. Dripping rust low on
Blue lined eddies of wind, cold down
To the shafts of their root: to kerb of tide
Where cracked mud quails into Kuan glaze;
To greening dunes where rivulets shine as

Water rises appointing silver streams
To encircle the clay. Mounting ships higher,
Disturbing the colder water of shells. Near
Nightjars undisclosed, where green icy stars
Ripple above the corn this late seaharvest.

‘Defending the Navy’ they say. Brothers
Who neither coincide nor drink at the same pub.
‘Army batons fascist’ puff the Navy.
‘Aristocrats sinking fast’ is the khaki reply.
A convoy timbers the bay. Aubergine hills

Wounded, lie heavily in the dishwater tributary.
Night falling catches the flares and bangs
On gorselit rock. Yellow birds shot from
Iridium creeks. – Let the whaleback of the sea
Fall back into a wrist of ripples, slit,

Snip up the moon sniggering on its back,
For on them sail the hulls of ninety wild birds
Defledged by this evening’s raid: jiggling up
Like a tapemachine the cold figures February
19th, 20th, 21st. A memorial of Swansea’s tragic loss.

Would the Warden of the Marches send us telegrams?
Who would dismiss them with *peace*; throw
Bézique on the table! *A New World*
Before us O Parliament. Be merciful
To our outcast minds shed from cuprite

Pyrite and tin. Bare our pricket hearts
Into a new alloy. Have mercy besides
On us who forged away bayonet and bone.
Standing out from the gun; bleared and solitary,
Shading his broccoli eyelashes; sending death

To no other than the girl he loves, gunner
1620B64 with Post Office pen, dismal heart,
And weak ink, signs and rescinds his love. –

On this vitreous monochrome of a plain
A striped rhizome cat fled across the estuary.

He chosen, blind behind the mourning grid,
Woe, fluttering at the bottom of a cage,
Finds parallel nerves on watersand; dives,
Into the torn prints of his mind, finds hurting lines.
He nearest to the heart stands dead in his

One and a half round the battle-waist suit;
Boots radiating with the exuberant shine
Of coffins among the pale and jumped up press cuttings
Strewn around his feet. O condole. Contrive.
With him in his constriction. He, with a blue

Division of blades in his head: with a
Shivershock of frustration, was a lover,
Or had been until now, who could what the world
Could not, without the aid of Freud, Norman Haire
Or Stopes, offer in his own strange way

Love sweet as a bird – savage as dog at his bone.
Now I wretched woman watch the white shaft
Of light greening the chimney embers,
The ciliated pines chink with ice this
Unwelcome frosty morning. Turn round a kitchen,

Once fragrant and rare as borage flower;
Sweep royal-blue walls; wash white the furniture,
Floor, and odd crockery – draw deep red hangers.
Who cherished love in peace and freedom, knew it
Delicate to hold as open window at dawn.

Where blue-eyed goose met meridian eyes shaded
There is no shine of celandine; our souls
Are cast into galvanised pits. I, crabbed youth,
He cruel negation. Twisted and rough...
Love distraised about the hearth and in running away

To bare our child reached no further than
The kiosk when love's stern face dragged back my will.
Never to be regretted or demolished.
To love, no bed of feathers but crock of thorns.
Yet a ritual; wanting no change. For who would

Strive with impeccable love? To love returning as
Gently as the rain, with grief harnessed
To his shoulders. To love which grew; survived all
Credulous hate. To meet underground as gravelovers do;
O Choice. O my beloved people remember this.

Overseas battling in circles of lust:
Spirit put to no better purpose than
Grain of sand. Overwhich. Backwards and
Forwards soldiers ran. Such battles of mule
Stubbornness; or retreat from vast stone walls,

Brought non-existence of past, present and
Future 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, left, right, left, right,
Accumulating into a monotonous pattern
Of dereliction and gloom. When battles should be
Fought at Home: as trencher-companions. *He at my side.*

PART IV

Cri Madonna

Un eich amynedd yn ddi-feth,
Un yn eich croes a'ch cri,
Mair, mam Iesu o Nasareth
A' Mari o Llanybri.

DYFNALLT

ARGUMENT

Of birth. Of uneventful birth. Owing to lack of money and to emotional strain death cuts in, double death, loss of lover and child. The struggle for birth under these conditions suggests a comparison with the Madonna, which becomes the nucleus and theme of the whole poem. *That the birth of flesh and blood is everywhere a noble event and that lives of all nationalities must be considered sacred – not to be callously destroyed.* Of the girl's distraction. Humiliation at her double loss. Stanzas of discordant fifths prevail. Cherubs weep, and a desolation and deadness of spirit is felt as after raids. The uselessness of the soldiers' jobs is intensified as they empty latrine buckets in the rain. Making them, since to rebel at this particular time would bring about the country's defeat, *our heroes. The heroes unknown who braved and bore, each a private crucifix.*

I, rimmed, awake before the dressing sun:
Alone I, pent up incinerator, serf of satellite gloom
Cower around my cradled self; find crape-plume
In a work-basket cast into swaddling clothes
Forcipated from my mind after the foetal fall:

Rising ashly, challenge blood to curb – compose –
Martial mortal, face a red mourning alone.
To the star of the third magnitude O my God,
Shriek, sear my swollen breasts, send succour
To sift and settle me. – This the labour of it...

But reality worse than the pain intrudes,
And no near doctor for six days. This
Also is added truth. Razed for lack of
Incomputable finance. For womb was
Fresh as the day and solid as your hand.

BLOOD OF ALL MEN. DRENCHED ANCESTORS OF WAR
WHETHER GERMAN. BRITISH. RUSSIAN. OR HIDE
FROM SOME OTHER FOREIGN FIELD: REMEMBER AGAIN
BLOOD IS HUMAN. BORN AT COST. REMEMBER THIS
ESPECIALLY YOU TAWDRY LAIRDS AND JUGGLERS OF MINT.

So double hurt was hard to console. Heart hatched
Shrived nerves each day in valley clove. Stretched
Mind tight into scarlet umbrella. Slatched
Nowhere the deflated ropes of blood. Wrenched
Harbouring heartbreak that is a crack grailed.

O where was my consoler. Where O where
You double beast down. Callous Cymru.
O love beaten. By loss humiliated.
Stretched out in muslin distress. Bound
By an iron wreath scattered with coloured beads.

O my people immeasurably alone.
No ringfinger: with the tips of my nails glazed
With sorrow with solemn gravity. Crown tipped sideways;
Ears blown back like lilac; with set face
And dry lids, waiting for Love's Arcade.

O LOVE was there no barddoniaeth?
No billing birds to be – coinheritor?

The night sky is braille in a rock of frost.

Why wail ribbon head. Crystallised cherubic
Cluster of stars. Why weep spilling splints to
Steelgraze the sky. Why shrillcold cerulean
Flesh with identity tacked hot on your wing.
Why dribble prick-ears, scintillating in an up

And down nailmourn. Tumbling to earth an icy precision
Of pins, distilling flies and peacock fins,
Tears in flames on fire, scorching air as they
Splash into heavier spills of quavering
Silver, drops, seals resinate woe, chills hedge and

Chilblain glades. Grisaille freezes the sense; crines
The gills into a drill motion; stills-shrills
The singing birds to kill; Drips rills
From envelopes, pustule eyes and hat. With
Urinal taint instils mind with a perilled dampness;

Fells skilled discipline to halls of humidity
Engraving clothes to trail balustrades without
Flesh; to a wilderness of pavements blue crayoned
With telegrams, where by a trick of air, owners
And cats remain, trying in mid-air to force riseup

Their own smashed brick. These men have brothers,
Are wived. And in dredging buckets of steam
Through stable-showers, men sway with the slush,
Dreamwhile teeming out cables and rope
Stretch barb wire tight across the crimped moon.

Wringing out moisture from mind and mouth,
Pulverising a haze to gauze their contorted feature,
Inebriate mouths cratered: others with lime fresh
On briared cheeks cut Easter Island shadows, elongating
Into weathered struts that strain all clouds for height.

On the lowering of the Dandelion Sun brail umbrage
For their pall: for those hovering above us tall as a
Siren's wail... pocked and pale as pumice stone...
Mother-shrivelled with tansy tears: and those from
Accumulators, with eyes vacant as motor horns

Who shutter out the bleakness and blink in their
Own way. In quiet corners men yawn out death.
Commiserately sodden. Here rain contravariant:
Here in discord and disobedience:
Probable mutiny and desertion: night splashes up

Mullions in heavy hayloads: lights up shiny
Paillettes on rawset faces: spits up frogs
And tins to fidget their bowels. Dodging
Pillars of rain; pails overbrimming swishswashing;
Drenching rifty suits, their steel shoulders subscribing

Thin laminations of grief. O my people here
With labour illused and minds deranged...
Through rivets of light; *Here are your Heroes.*
While high up, swallowsoft...
Marine butterflies flood out the whole estuary.

PART V

... mi a glywais lais y pedwerydd anifail yn dywedyd, Tyred, a gwêl.
Ac mi a edrychais; ac wele farch gwelw-las: ac enw yr hwn oedd yn
eistedd arno oedd Marwolaeth: ac yr oedd Uffern yn canlyn gyd âg
ef. A rhoddwyd iddynt awdurdod ar y bedwaredd ran o'r ddaear, i
ladd â chleddyf, ac â newyn, ac â marwolaeth, ac â bwystfilod y ddaear.

A phan agorodd efe y bummed sêl, mi a welais dan yr allor enei-
diau y rhai a laddesid am air Duw, ac am y dystiolaeth oedd
ganddynt.

A hwy a lefasant â llef uchel, gan ddywedyd, Pa hyd, Arglwydd,
sanctaidd a chywir, nad ydwyf yn barnu ac yn dïal ein gwaed ni ar
y rhai sydd yn trigo ar y ddaear?

A gynau gwynion a roed i bob un o honynt;

DATGUDDIAD. PENNOD VI

ARGUMENT

The same bay plated with ice. Industrial war progressing and the anxiety for after-war commerce and competitive air-lines. The soldiers recognising this futility, but also, not without some faith in social and economic changes. The gunner returned, and faithful to his girl, they rise through the strata of the sky to seek peace and solace from the sun. Their love in harmony on cloud in fourth dimensional state. But memory bringing with it a consciousness of war – responsibility – they work towards this end. Fail. For the world demands their return, and down through the lower strata of the earth they travel, to the wounded bay where no human contact is found, only pylons, telegraph wires, and a monstrous placard which reads: 'Mental Home for Poets'. The gunner interned under pressure, resolves to free the dragon, and take fate in his own hands. The symbol having been already introduced in Part I of this poem when the woodpecker seen as a 'dragon of wings' introduced the gunner's identity. He walks meekly into the Mental Home. The girl turns away: towards a hard and new chemical dawn breaking up the traditional skyline.

Air white with cold. Cycloid wind prevails.
On ichnolithic plain where no step stirs
And winter hardens into plate of ice:
Shoots an anthracite glitter of death
From their eyes, – these men shine darkly.

With stiff betrayal; dark suns on pillows
Of snow. But not eclipsed, for out of cauterised
Craters, a conclave of architects with
Ichnographic plans, shall bridge stronger
Ventricles of faith. They know also

Etonic vows: the abstractions which may arise:
That magnates out of prefabricated
Glass, may build Chromium Cenotaphs –
Work and pay for all! Contract aerodromes
To lift planes where ships once crawled, over

Baleful continents to the Caribbean Crane,
Down, to the Southern Christ of Palms.
Back on red competitive lines: chasing
Chinese blocks of uranium: above pack-ice
Snapping like wolves on Siberian shores.

Over wails of boracic and tundra torn wounds,
Darkening 'peaked' Fuji-yama, clearing
Cambrian caves where xylophone reeds hide
Menhir glaciers and appointed feet.
Out of this hard. Out of this sheet of zinc.

We by centrifugal force... rose softly...
Faded from bloodsight. We, he and I ran
On to a steel escalator, the white
Electric sun drilling down on the cubed ice;
Our cyanite flesh chilled on aluminium

Rail. Growing taller, our demon diminishing
With steep incline. Climbed at gradient
42°; on to a trauma stratus
Where a multitude of birds, each wing
A sunset against sheet of ice, dipped

And flew throughout our cloth piercing folds
Of pain and fear. Higher through moist
And luminous dust: up breathless to a jungle of
Winedamp, out of gravity and territorial
Sight on to a far outer belt muscling-in

The Earth's curve. In such spirals of air
Sailed ketch and kestrel, fighting propeller,
Swastika wings and grey rubber rafts: this strange
Evidence reconciling as
Tide and shape floated by on swift moving layer.

Out of it. Out of it. To a ceiling and clarity
Of *Peace*. Sweet white air varied as syllables.
Spray of air fresh, fragrant as beehive glossed
Over with beech. So quiet a terrace to tune-in-to
With Catena shine round each cell of light

To laze carelessly in the Crown of the Sky;
But timeless minds held us victims
To the sour truth. *War and responsibility*.
He, of Bethlehem treading a campaign
Of clouds the fleecy cade purring at his side:

Sun, serene sense, tinting page of his face roan.
Bent over wooden table and glazed chart
And with compass and astronomical calculations
He, again at my side, pricked lines and projected
Latitudes so that we stood we cared not

How, upside down over South American canes.
Boots proved cumbersome at the height. Bleak battledress
Irritating as old salvaged reed collar;
Black and gravel wings pinned to his heart,
A grief already told. In such radium

Activity – white starlings – suspended
On string like Calder 'stills' – shivered
Like morning stars in fresh open sky
I contented in this fourth dimensional state
Past through, him and the table, pursued

My own work slightly *below* him. In
Sandals and sunsuit lungs naked to the light,
Sitting on chair of glass with no fixed frame
Leaned to the swift machine threading over twill:
'Singer's' perfect model scrolled with gold,

Chromium wheel and black structure, firm on
Mahogany plinth. Nails varnished with
Chanel shocking! Ears jewelled: light hand
Tipped with dorcas' silver thimble tracing thin
Aertex edge: trimmings, and metal buttons

Stitched by hand. Slim needle and strong sharp
Thread. Coats' cotton-twist No. 48. Excelling always as
Soldier shirt finished floated down to earth.
But cold at night. We wrapt our own mystery
Around us; trailed in cerulean mosquito nets

As kale canopy lifted from cooler zones below.
Pack of stars in full cry icing the heavens
As we were compelled to descend. *Disendowed*,
By the State. By will of those hankering
After pig standards of gold. The fall was heavy,

Too sudden for our laughter so that we
Took it with us; dragged it slowly down through
Waled skylanes. Shocked Capricorn and Cancer who
Winked to control us like Belisha beacons.
Tacked out of our course into opaline dusk.

A huge silence ashiver. Huge Witness dwells.
In Celestial Study to right and left lucid
Eyes pay tribute, angel secretaries with
Paper wings – and paper so scarce – dyed mauve-scarlet
With chemical rings; speech blue behind aniline minds.

Away from this. Flattery. God-Hypocrisy.
Not even a whisper escaped our lips as we
Continued in sharp descent, like old minesweepers
Creaking through boisterous storms, *our own God*
Within us. Down into xerophilous air clarion snow

Percolating, oölite flakes warm as
Owl tufts or deciduous leaves. Falling on
Flesh with the lightness of moths. Without breath
Or bell of joy lurched slipped-slid into icy
Vacuums. Fell out of frozen cylinders. Flew

Earthwards like arctic terns the spangled
Mirrors still on our wings. Colder. Continuous as *nemsreel*,
Quadrillion cells spotting the air, stinging
The face like a swarm of bees. Lower. A vitreous green
Paperweight – the sky is greenglaze with snow flying

Upwards zionwards. Such iconic sky bears promise.
Dredging slowly down, veiling shield of sky hard.
Cold. Austere. Tumbled over each other lurched
Into the dark penumbra: then, through a
Rift as suddenly, the solid stone of earth

Rushed up; hit us hotly as household iron.
Over this maimed cadaverous globe, the wind
Had streaked each ridge with piercing prongs
Of a curry comb, leaving here and there
A thin sheet of aluminium which shone from out

Of the Earth's crust. Over set currents
Of ice, emerald streams and blue electric lakes
Worked simultaneously to purify the
World... down driving down... following the thin
Strokes of mapping pens stretching page of

Music over vast terrain. This, and stronger
Network of rails: pylons and steel installations
The only landmarks of our territory...
Down, to this bleak telegraphic planet and its solid
Pyramids of canvas. Down, gunner and black

Madonna with heart of tin; surrounded
By fluttering greed of ravens, their
Beaks of bone breaking up the wounds of winter;
Croak; a mad voice sunk down a sink. The attendant
Curlews at the forage edge wearing moth-eaten

Shawls; shagreen legs brittle as ember twigs.
Pipe plaintive descants that sharpen the shale.
From ascending stirrups steps to the sun, down,
Dragged-down we descended the slimerot ladders,
Rats withdrawing each foot: rust worn where other

Boots had rung. To the Bay known before,
The warm and stagnant air raising wellshafts
Of putrid flesh sunk deep in desert sands. Stepped out onto
Blue blaze of snow. Barbed wire. No man of bone.
A placard to the right which concerned us:

Mental Home For Poets. He alone on this
Isotonic plain: against a jingle of Generals
And Cabinet Directors determined
A stand. Declared a Faith. Entered 'Foreign
Field' like a Plantagenet King: his spirit

Gorsefierce: hands like perfect quatrains.
Green spindle tears seep out of closed lids...
Mourn murmuring... remembering my brother.
His Cathedral mind in Bedlam. Sign and
Lettering-black grail of quavering curves.

Distrained... mallowfrail... turned to where.
But *today which is tomorrow.*

Salt spring from frosted sea filters palea light
Raising tangerine and hard line of rind on the
Astringent sky. Catoptric on waterice he of deep love
Frees dragon from the glacier glade
Sights death fading into chilblain ears.

Notes

Inscription

Hast thou heard what Avaon sung,
The son of Taliesin of just lay?
The cheek will not conceal the anguish of the heart.

A crow sang a fable on the top
Of an oak, above the junction of two rivers.
Understanding is more powerful than strength.

Make the best on all occasions
Of what you already possess:
Better than nothing is the shelter of a rush.

CATTWG THE WISE SANG IT (5TH CENTURY)

Part I

And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another,
What meaneth this?

Others mocking, said, These men are full of new wine.

ACTS II, CHAPTER II

Quotation: from the Bible of William Morgan, the Bishop of St Asaph's translation 1588: later amended and revised by Richard Parry and John Davies, 1620. Here the English translation is incorrect as the original Greek word implies sweet wine. John Kitto, DD, FSA, has pointed this out. The Welsh rendering is *Gwin* (the G a mutation), *win* meaning wine, *melus*: sweet.

Saint Cadoc: saint of the fifth century. Spelt in many ways including *Cattwg* (see Inscription, p. [42]). His festival is commemorated in early spring. To him are attributed many miracles, triads, and fables. The last being incorrect, as they belong to a Cadoc of a later period. He is one of the too many Cambro-British Saints (we gave some to Ireland!), Bernacus (Bernach), Beuno, Cadoc, Carantocus (Carannog), David (Dewi), Gundleus (Cynlais), Iltutus (Illtyd), Kebius (Cybi), Paternus (Padarn), and Winifred (Gwenfrewi), see *Lives of Cambro-British Saints* in translation from Ancient Welsh and Latin MSS in the British Museum, by the Rev. W.J. Rees, MA, FSA and the more recent translation by the Rev. A.W. Wade Evans.

Homeric hills: Geraldus Cambrensis wrote in 1180 in his *Itinerary Through Wales*: ‘Maenor Pyrr... that is, the Mansions of Pyrrus, who also possessed the Island of Chaldey, which the Welsh call Inys Pyrr, or the Island of Pyrrus... distant about three miles from Pembroch.’ There are historians who believe the Trojans came and settled on this coast. In years to come archaeologists may discover both the Temples and City as Sir Arthur Evans and Schliemann discovered Knossos and Troy – by studying the legends in the locality.

Woolglints: I had the image of iridescent bits of dust which float about in the sunbeams like pieces of flock. As the estuary is covered with sheep, and the atmosphere I wanted to create, a supernatural one, I felt that there was bound to be some density – a stifling quality in the air. I therefore imagined these woolglints, which were bound to float about from the backs of the sheep, and the minute weeds – almost-green invisible cells – hovering over the quagmires.

Ligustrum: botanical name for privet. One of the sacred trees mentioned in Taliesin’s *Battle of the Trees*, see reference in *The White Goddess* by Robert Graves. Ash and lilac also belong to the Oleaceae family.

Orcadian birds: whimbrel: *Numenius phaeopus phaeopus* (Linn.), small curlew which arrives on our shore with the third stream of migration from the Shetlands and Orkneys, and is usually seen in early spring.

Cattraeth: ‘The *Gododdin*, the subject of which is the disastrous battle of Cattraeth, contains upwards of nine hundred lines, and is the oldest Welsh poem extant, it was written in the earlier part of the sixth century.’ Of the three hundred who took part, only three returned. Aneirin who wrote this Ancient Epic was one of the survivors.

Father of Denbigh Rock, Mother of Pembroke Stream: Roberts of Ruthin (i.e. Great-grandfather John Roberts of Bryn Mawr, one of the founders of the London Missionary Society): Garbutt ap Williams of Pembroke. My parents.

Stonehenge Blue: Sir Cyril Fox (director of the National Museum of Wales), when lecturing on ‘Beaker Man in Wales and Wilts 1900 BC’, said: ‘The circle of blue stones at Stonehenge was of stone hewn and carried from the Precelly Mountain in Pembrokeshire, but no factual evidence had been produced as to why Precelly stone had been taken to Wiltshire’... he suggested that it might have been because it was a Holy Mountain.

Gypsy slit on ears: three notches cut by the gypsies on the ear with a wooden knife to prevent rickets.

Red Book of Hergest: one of ‘The Four Ancient Books of Wales’ in the library of Jesus College, Oxford, MSS of Ancient Welsh prose and poetry. Many of the authors still remain unknown. The ‘play’ here, is on the scribes who have tampered with the MSS in the thirteenth century, and the poet Iolo Morganwg in particular, who forged numerous parchment poems.

Pull down the flag: the Welsh flag was torn down by English soldiers who were drafted to a Welsh regiment. East Coast, March 1941.

Coracle: coracles are still used on the Towy and Teivy. ‘Two men work together and take the river, one rowing and steering with one hand, and holds with his other hand one end of the long net; the other end being grasped by the second coracle man, and together they sweep the river for salmon and sewin.’ They have their own dialect ‘*Gwar bach y gored*.’ *Gored* means a weir for taking fish, and is a very early Welsh word, found in one of the poems in the MS ‘Black Book of Carmarthen’, c. 1159. ‘The word coracle is probably derived from the Celtic word *Corawg*, which signifies ship.’ From ‘Geraldus Cambrensis’, written in 1180: ‘The boats are made of twigs, not oblong nor pointed, but almost round, covered within and without with raw hides. Today they are covered with Calico. The fishermen carry these boats on their shoulders; on which occasion that famous dealer in fables, Bleddercus, who lived a little before our time, thus mysteriously said, “There is amongst us a people who, when they go out in search of prey, carry their horses on their backs to the place of plunder.” Unfortunately they were used three days ago to transport stolen butter across the river.’ This event was printed in the *Carmarthen Journal* with exclamation marks! See also an article in *The Field*, January 6th, 1945, by the Author.

Torque: from Llywarch Hen, sixth century. (Translation H.I. Bell)

Four and twenty sons were mine,
Golden-torqued, princes of the host.

From Aneirin’s sixth-century ‘Gododdin’ (translation Ernest Rhys): ‘A brilliant spirited melody it is ours to sing – to tell how Cynon came, and at his coming the beaks of the grey eagles were sated by his hand. Of all the wearers of the gold torques, who went to Cattræth, there was not one better than Cynon.’

From Geraldus Cambrensis: ‘Moreover I must not be silent concerning the Collar (*torques*) which they call St Canauc’s (AD 492); for it is most like

to gold in weight, nature, and colour; it is in four pieces wrought round, joined together artificially, and clefted as it were in the middle, with a dog's head, the teeth standing upward; it is esteemed by the inhabitants so powerful a relic, that no man dares swear falsely when it is laid upon him.'

From Sir John Lloyd, MA, D.Litt, FBA Historian: 'A thick golden chain worn as a necklet by Princes and persons of nobility.'

In 1692 one of these chains was found near Harlech; it weighed eight ounces and measured four feet in length.

Semitic wings: not enough is said of the active part Jews took in this war. It is for this reason and no other, that I refer to a plane piloted by Jews.

Part II

Praise to Summer

Thou summer, father of delight,
With thy dense spray and thickets deep;
Gemmed monarch, with thy rapturous light,
Rousing thy subject glens from sleep,
Proud has thy march of triumph been,
Thou prophet, prince of forest green...

The Swan

Fair swan, the lake you ride
Like white-robed abbot in your pride;
Round-foot bird of the drifted snow,
Like heavenly visitant you show...
Pure white through the wild waves shown;
In shirt as bright as crystal stone
And doublet all of lilies made
And flowered waistcoat you're arrayed,
With jacket wove of the wild white rose;
And your gown like honeysuckle shows.
Radiant you all fowls among,
White-cloaked bird of heaven's throng.

DAFYDD AP GWILYM (c. 1325–85)

Quotation: the first part of the above translation (i.e. 'Praise to Summer')

is by A.J. Johnes. The second part (i.e. 'The Swan') by H. Idris Bell. These I believe to be the best representative translation of each poem. To shew the misinterpretation under which an original poem goes, I will quote the first two lines of Dafydd's other translators to 'Praise to Summer'. A.P. Graves:

Summer, father of fulness,
Green-tangled, flower-spangled brakes;

David Bell:

The father of loud ardency;
The father of the wildwood canopy;

W.J. Gruffydd, Ernest Rhys, Nigel Heseltine, George Borrow have also contributed different translations to this poem. A rough and literal translation given to me by Keidrych Rhys would be:

You the Summer, father of potency,
Sire of the covered intoxicated tree-tops.

Myddfai Hills: on the roads from Llandovery over the Carmarthen Vans lies Myddfai and the lake from which the mother of the physicians is supposed to have returned. The physicians not only attended the Royal Prince of Wales in the thirteenth century, but handed down the famous book and talent from father to son 'for more than two thousand years' according to legend. '*How to be Merry*, If you would at all times be merry, eat saffron in meat or drink, and you will never be sad. But, beware of eating over much, lest you should die of excessive joy.' '*Recipe for Sore Eyes*, Take red roses, wild celery vervain, red fennel, maidenhair, house leek, celandine, and wild thyme, wash them clean and macerate in white wine for a day and a night, then distil from a brass pot. The first water you get will be like silver, this will be useful for any affection of the eye and for a sty.''

Seiriol: two monks that met at the well of Clorach, Llandyfydog. Cybi had the morning sun in his face as he approached the well, so his face soon darkened; while Seiriol, coming from the other direction, had the sun on his back... and was pale... always. *Seiriol Wyn*, Seiriol the white, or pale. *Cybi Felyn*, Cybi the yellow, or sunburnt. Matthew Arnold wrote a poem about these two and mixed up the colours!

Tin-blower: a sheet of zinc to which is added a handle by the blacksmith. When the fires lose heart the blower is hung up by a piece of wire to narrow and intensify the draught. The rattle and ugliness of the tin is very irritating.

Ffyn-on-ol-Bri: LCC spring surrounded by barbed wire six hundred yards from the village. The only well that *does not* dry up; is not discoloured; and contains brown worms. This is the only supply of fresh drinking water for the village.

Part III

Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth to put it into a bag of holes.

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; Consider your ways.

THE MESSAGE OF HAGGAI. CHAPTER I

Defending the Navy: on the Island of South Ronaldsay, 1941, the RA batteries defended the Navy when the *Prince of Wales* and other battleships lay in home waters. For this defence the RA received a special divisional sign. In spite of this scraps were frequent between the two services so that a distinction had to be made: the army attending the only pub at one hour and the navy at another.

Swansea raid: February 19th, 20th, 21st, 1941, when several members of the N.F.S. of Birmingham said the intensity of the raid was worse than their own Midland tragedy. The severest hardship was: no room for Welsh evacuees. In our village we had accommodated forty-five from east London, so that we were compelled to refuse children whose parents we knew.

Warden of the Marches: the Norman lords who took Wales piecemeal and divided it up into fiefs boundaries. Each territory was governed by its own administration and jurisdiction, and controlled by an English King who was a Marcher Lord himself over larger domains.

Bézique: from the game of cards with two packs, 'probably from Spanish *besico*, little kiss, an allusion to the meeting of the Queen and Knave, an important feature in the game'. Table of Bézique scores: Marriage (King and Queen of any suit) declared, 20 points; Royal Marriage (King and Queen of trumps) declared, 40 points; Bézique (Queen of Spades and Knave of Diamonds) declared, 40 points. These are a few examples of the score to show that the arrangement of the cards is based on early everyday life. The symbol came to my mind as a good representative of soldiers

longing for their home: and the pattern of soldiers themselves playing with cards at odd snatches of the day.

Pricket: the candle pricket, sharp metallic point on which candles are stuck.

Rhizome cat: the reference to a cat is linked with those mentioned at the beginning of Part II: ‘*On seafield pools shivering with watercats.*’ I used rhizome because it is an underground root just as this wild cat is of an underground root and lives in the undergrowth. I also had an image of a yellow striped cat: and rhizome is used throughout the country for yellow dyes. There is also something about the jungle in the sound and spelling of the word rhizome. Wild cats are still found in Wales.

Part IV

The Cry of the Madonna

The same your patience unailing,
The same your cross and your cry,
Mary, mother of Nazareth
And Mary of Llanybri

DYFNALLT

Quotation: the above translation is from one of Dyfnallt’s poems ‘Cri Madonna’. He is one of our poets and a leading Nonconformist minister. I should like to point out here, that I have intentionally used Welsh quotations as this helps to give the conscious compact and culture of another nation. The village of Llanybri, around which this poem is set, is Welsh speaking. Most of the people, *with the exception of the older generation*, can also speak English; either better than we can, or with a strange imagery and intonation found in common with all peasants of the soil. I have *never* heard a Welshman say, ‘Indeed to goodness,’ etc., or any of the jargon which is broadcast or printed as such... and will have more to say on this subject on another occasion.

Incomputable finance: during this war the Government allowed apes at the Zoo thirty shillings per week for their food, while soldiers’ wives received seventeen shillings and sixpence per week to cover food, rent, clothing, and the security and protection of a child.

Barddoniaeth: Welsh: poetry, verse.

Blue crayoned: a line of knotted string covered with miscellaneous notes: 'For Higgs & Porters try 00 Downing Street.' – 'I won't be more than five minutes John Evans' – 'Still carrying on Riggs and Rogues Ltd.' These, and tragic words interspersed, clipped on with safety-pins, wire, hairpins: or emergency signs chalked up with blue crayons on cracked and broken pavements; and behind this rain-washed line of dripping notes – a cloud of dust – SPACE – and wideways stretch of sheltered rubble.

Easter Cuts [sic]: huge mathematical heads and shoulders which grate against the fierce storms of the tropics; and puzzle us still whether they stand outside the British Museum or on the bleak plains of Easter Island. *A Prismatic Art*, each feature cut, alters in expression with the movement of the sun, so that he is grinning under the evening light, may sneer before the rising of the sharp dawn.

Part V

I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

And I looked and beheld a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.

And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth. To kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.

And they cried with a loud voice saying, 'How long O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?'

And white robes were given unto everyone of them.

REVELATION. CHAPTER VI

Caribbean Crane: the poet Hart Crane 'who made a perfect dive' off the SS *Orizaba*, and was drowned in the Caribbean on 26th April 1932.

Catena: born Biagio, c. 1470–1531. A Venetian pupil from Bellini's Bottega. His painting in the National Gallery, 'Saint Jerome in his Study', resembles my own convent upbringing, so that I connect him with the fragrance of beeswax – peace – serene pervading warmth of the southern air.

Reed collar: used in this village on an occasional horse. The collar is made of woven reeds and has no outer leather cover: the shade is olive-green: neatness and firmness of craftsmanship something which we have carelessly lost. I have also seen one plaited in straw.

White starling: January 1943, there was a column in the *Western Mail* by an ornithologist saying that a white starling had been seen flying over Carmarthen. The starling has appeared in Welsh mythology more than once: and was 'dispatch rider' for Branwen when it flew and took her message from Ireland to Wales, so that she might be delivered of her unhappiness and *hiraeth* for Wales.

Calder: Alexander Calder.

Gorsefierce: Leguminosae: Ulex and Genista both words of Celtic origin. The gorse is to be found in early Triads and Welsh literature of the sixth century: a favourite flower with King Alfred and the Anglo-Saxons: and worn later as a cognisance by the Plantagenet kings. In the language of flowers gorse symbolizes anger. A resisting spirit throughout the severest weather, when a sheet of piercing yellow covers the hills blossoming in this valley: November, December, January and February.

Plantagenet King: Lordship of Commote Penrhyn, owned by Edward I, Prince of Wales, during the Hundred Years' War and which consisted of a pasture and grange surrounding the present villages of Llanybri and Llanstephan: Edward, the Prince of Wales, at the same time also owned a larger portion of the Duchy of Cornwall.