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## RELIGION

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# Evensong at Peterborough

By Philip Toynbee

ON ONE OF the wettest and foggiest days of early May my wife and I were driving from our house in the Wye valley to the house of a friend near King's Lynn. Neither of us had ever seen Peterborough Cathedral, so we started early enough to include it in our journey. We knew most of that cross-country route very well—the road along the suddenly-narrowing Severn between Lydney and Minsterworth; the ring-road round Gloucester; the sharp rise into the Cotswolds; the gentle countryside of Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, ending so abruptly in the slashed soil, bulldozers, and new urbanisation of Milton Keynes. But this time we were travelling further north than usual, to skirt Northampton and Wellingborough; and we had just got a faint whiff of the fens when we were grabbed, so it seemed, by a great new highway which thrust us through the scattered industry, suburbs, and railway-yards of Peterborough.

We got no more than a glimpse of the old inner city before we saw the long, low-slung cathedral in front of us and an open gate into the close. There is something in every cathedral to take the breath away, and at Peterborough this comes as soon as you set eyes on the amazing west front with its three huge and equal portals, early Gothic in their perfect simplicity, and only slightly marred by a fussy little fifteenth-century porch stuck on to the base of the central arch. A notice on the porch-door told us that Evensong had already begun and would we please sit down until it was over. If we wished to join the service we could take our seats in the choir.

But to do this would have meant a rather ostentatious walk over the last, and pewless, section of the nave; so we compromised by sitting down on the foremost nave pew but one. The choir was half-way through a psalm as we sat down, the choirmaster hunched at the western end of the first decani stall, conducting with a passionate, almost agitated fervour. Between this surpiced conductor and ourselves a congregation of some twenty or thirty faced each other in the remaining stalls of the choir, and each row was neatly

terminated by two clerics in full canonicals—perhaps the dean and three of his canons.

Choir, congregation, and priests seemed to be islanded there, between the nave to the west, the aisles to north and south, and an eastern space of crossing, chancel and apse which we had not yet been able to see but which seemed to stretch almost as far beyond the celebration as the splendid late-Norman nave was stretching away behind our backs. As for us, although we are familiar with Anglican liturgies and have often attended Evensong in the chapel of a little convent across the valley from our house, it was impossible to feel that we were fully a part of those proceedings in the unknown cathedral.

This was not only due to our physical separation from the service, but also, I think, because a strange air of professionalism and remoteness enveloped those priests and choristers as they went so gracefully through the prescribed devotions for Saturday, May 6th, 1978 A.D. Both the real professionals and the congregation seemed like figures on a stage, so isolated were they from the rest of the cathedral, so brightly lit in the surrounding gloom.

A LONG LESSON from Judges was read by a priest on the decani side: we were reminded of how Gideon had been called by the angel to destroy the altar of Baal before attacking the hosts of Midian. Then everyone turned to the east to recite the creed; and after this an old hymn was sung, but to a difficult modern setting which needed even more passionate gestures from the choirmaster. A succession of prayers was then read aloud by a second priest, and when these were finished another of the celebrants read a lesson from the Epistle to the Hebrews.

At about 3.45 Evensong was gracefully brought to an end, and the choir filed westward towards us, smallest choristers in the lead, then wheeled with excellent precision to their right and disappeared up the north aisle and into the transept. The priests followed them, and finally the congregation began to break up with that air

of informality too suddenly returning which always gives a certain awkwardness to the ending of a religious function.

So we also got up from our places, to make our slow circumambulation of the cathedral, guide-book in hand, much admiring, as we were told to do, "the 15th-century retro-quire which envelops the apse in its lower stories." We walked through the west porch again and found ourselves back in the quietly undistinguished close. We drove out of that drizzling city and lost ourselves for many minutes on the great new ring-road before we found our way out at last towards Wisbech and the east.

BY NOW this episode has compelled my imagination many days, and driven my mind in several different directions. Sometimes, when I think of Peterborough, the whole of that Evensong seems almost as unreal, even uncanny, as the famous 18th-century Versailles ball which those two English ladies claimed to have watched some eighty years ago. Entering a cathedral is often followed by at least a hesitant translation through time and this little remembered drama of traditional Evensong sometimes seems as remote in time from the England we had been passing through as it had immediately seemed remote in space. Yet there were elements in the celebration itself which showed very clearly that it belonged to our own age: a modern translation of the Bible had been used; that hymn had been sung in a thoroughly modern manner; there had been a merciful absence of any parsonical droning.

But the dominant impression which remains is of a gracious, holy but esoteric ceremony being performed in the choir at Peterborough, massively isolated from the modern city outside by the wider spaces of the cathedral; by the close; by the little market-town which had already been long surrounded by an outer ring of railway-works and suburbs, and which was now being further enveloped by a new industrial sprawl.

And yet we had not been only spectators of that deft performance; so far as each of us had found it possible we had also been participants. And if we had arrived five minutes earlier we would certainly have accepted the invitation to take two of those vacant places in the choir-stalls. For certainly we both belonged—wholly in spirit and largely in faith—with what was being celebrated in Peterborough Cathedral on that Saturday afternoon at the tail-end of the football season. And certainly we were saddened by the weird isolation of that evensong; and certainly we were well aware of how strenuously the Churches have been trying to break through that isolation during the last fifty years.

But I doubt whether even the most fervent moderniser could believe that if only the choir had been singing rock-and-roll, if only the lessons had proclaimed God the True Integration of Self, then the whole nave would have been filled with cheerful and loud-voiced participants, greatly to the detriment of the takings that afternoon by Peterborough United Football Club. It is absurd to pretend any longer that a jazzed-up liturgy and a castrated faith will bring the multitude flocking back into our cathedrals and our parish churches.

And yet there seemed to be something serenely *resigned* about that celebration; as if to say, "we've done our best to bring them in, but since they won't come at any price let's get back to doing it just the way *we* like. This drama is now being performed for the sake of the cast alone, and if the auditorium is empty all we can do is to keep the old play going in the hope that it may one day attract an audience again. . . ."

Perhaps this seems the only possible attitude for the Churches to adopt in an age when ninety per cent even of that minority who ever enter a cathedral do so only in order to admire the 15th-century retro-quire. "Damn!" they mutter, as they come through the great west door, "There seems to be some sort of service going on. We'd better go out and have some tea and come back later." But surely every practising member of a Christian church must hope that cathedral naves will be filled again for other ceremonies than a performance of *The Messiah* or Verdi's *Requiem*. So I began to ask myself whether certain hesitant divinations of my own might, after all, make some small contribution to the rebirth of Christianity in England. What follows is the (almost desperate) compression of a much larger work called *A Marriage of Heaven and Earth* which I abandoned about six months ago.

1. **T**HE FULL ARRAY of orthodox Christianity has been a splendid and inspiring body of doctrine. And if this faith is now dying to be born again, the emergent phoenix must shine at least as brightly and transformingly as the old one used to do. "Glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord."

2. And like every new Christian exploration this one must turn back yet again to the New Testament and find in that undimmed constellation yet a new pattern of signs and proclamations.

3. Reading those too-familiar books again I have begun to think that I see something hinted at there, and nearly spoken aloud, which may have been missed by other readers and which might, by one of those slight shifts of vision, re-illuminate the word and give a new Christian message to our time.

4. The earliest recorded Israelites had understood God in the image of their Most Admired Man. At that time this meant any great king or emperor who had carved out a great dominion for himself; who ruled it with beneficence towards those who humbled themselves before him, but with terrible anger against all who resisted or denied him.

5. But a new kind of God has been gradually softening the harsh lines of the old one; and what Jesus nearly did, by his recorded words, his life and death, was to proclaim this new vision of God as a total transcendence of Jahweh, the tribal tyrant of Israel.

6. Yet what was left to the world, according to the traditional interpretation of the New Testament, is like a sublime statue half-emerging from a great block of rough-hewn granite. Because Jesus was himself a believing Jew; because he suffered from an anger which could distort his marvellous vision; perhaps because his words were misunderstood even by his closest disciples,

<sup>1</sup> This may seem a blasphemous impertinence; but there is an old image of the pygmy who sits on a giant's shoulders, and sees a few yards more of the great landscape discovered by the giant's mighty vision.

the Christian Churches inherited a concept of God which is centaur-like in its weird inconsonance.<sup>1</sup>

7. The traditional God of Christianity has been that same old Emperor-Creator but one who also loves his creature-subjects as a father loves his children. Thus the Problem of Evil has bedevilled the Christian faith at least since the age of Augustine and Pelagius. This ancient conundrum of a God who is both all-powerful and all-loving has become even more acute both as men have learned more about the physical universe and also as they have come to regard cruelty as the worst of all human—and *a fortiori* of divine—abominations.

8. We have been told that an all-powerful, all-loving Creator-God has made a world of earthquakes and meningitis; of Belsen and Hiroshima; a world which has reached its present state after the brutal, billion-year tale of the fittest so savagely surviving.

9. Almost every modern theologian has tried to solve this problem; but it can never be solved until one of the contradictory terms is removed. What was so nearly revealed in the New Testament, what can be seen there now in brilliant but elusive outline, is a *God who does not possess two distinct attributes called "power" and "love", but a God whose power lies only and wholly in his love.*

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10. A believable God must always be an extrapolation from the most admired of men, for we see such men as true manifestations of God. In our own time all Christians, and all those non-believers who still live in the moral ambiance of Christianity, are agreed that Jesus is more to be admired than Augustus; St Francis than Genghis Khan; the Curé d'Ars than Napoleon. Yet most Christians still try to worship a God who is half-Genghis-Khan and half-St-Francis.

11. And even if the Jesus of the New Testament is not a sinless man—his terrible rages against all who would not accept him are all-too-human—the essential message of his words, his life and his death is that love triumphs not only over all physical power but even over death itself. (We

have tended to treat St Paul's great passage in his First Letter to the Corinthians as the natural hyperbole of a poet. But it is literally true, even in this world, that love is the only enduring power, since it is the only power which is not ultimately self-defeating.)

12. All Christians believe that God was made manifest in Jesus Christ: many Christians still believe that God *was* Jesus Christ. But Jesus not only exercised no physical or political power; he treated the offer of such power as a temptation by the devil. Can anyone believe that the Father revels in what the Son so scornfully rejected?

13. Every theology is a mythology and must have new stories to tell.

14. This story begins in that total ignorance of

### “Afternoon Prayers”...

IT WAS CLEAR TO ME THAT after the First World War there would have to come a second, a third, a tenth. Most faces expressed callousness, supreme egotism, indifference to everything outside their own ken, and, quite often, stupidity. Here they prayed and there they slaughtered. The same priests who preached love on Sunday morning hunted a fox, a hare, or some other helpless creature on Sunday afternoon or tried to hook a fish in the Vistula. The Polish officers who strutted about displaying their medals, brandishing their swords, and saluting each other hadn't the slightest chance of defending their country if it were attacked by Russia or Germany. And it was just as hard to believe that England would surrender her mandate in Palestine or that the Arabs would allow the Jews to establish a nation there.

By now, I knew that atheism and materialism were just as unsubstantial as the religions. All my probings led to the same conclusion—that there was some scheme within Creation, someone we call God, but He had not revealed Himself to anyone nor was there even the slightest indication that He desired love, peace, and justice. The whole history of man and beast; all the facts pointed to the very opposite—that this was a God of strength and cruelty whose principle was: *Might makes right*.

ODDLY ENOUGH, THIS TOTAL SCEPTICISM or agnosticism led me to a kind of private mysticism. Since God was completely unknown and eternally silent, He could be endowed with whatever traits one elected to hang upon Him. Spinoza had bestowed Him with two known attributes and an endless array of unknown ones. But why couldn't one fantasise many other attributes? Why couldn't creativeness be one of His attributes? Why couldn't beauty, harmony, growth, expediency, playfulness, humour, will, sex, change, freedom, and caprice represent divine attributes too? And where was it written that He was the only God? Maybe He belonged to a whole army of gods, an infinite

hierarchy. Maybe He procreated and multiplied and brought forth billions of angels, seraphim, Aralim, and cherubim in His cosmic harem as well as new generations of gods. Since nothing was known about Him and nothing could be known, why not confer upon this divine X all the possible values? The cabbalists had done this in their own fashion, the idolators in another, and the Christians and Muslims in another still.

I personally was fully prepared to crown Him with all kinds of possible attributes except benevolence and compassion. To ascribe mercy to a God who for millions of years had witnessed massacres and tortures and who had literally built an entire world on the principle of violence and murder was something my sense of justice wouldn't allow me to do. In my mind I created a kind of pecking order between us. I, a dust speck trembling with fear and filled with a sort of sense of right based upon my own silly urges and convictions; He, a universal murderer, a cosmic Genghis Khan or Napoleon—eternal, infinite, omnipotent, so wise and mighty in knowledge and technique that He could keep track of every electron, every atom, every gnat, fly, and microbe. It was even possible that one could phone Him directly with a request through the medium of prayer but with no guarantee whatsoever of an answer. I had actually appropriated Spinoza's God but I had extended Him, anthropomorphised Him, bestialised Him, and reworked Him in my imagination to suit my moods. Incredibly enough, I “phoned” Him my requests and hoped somehow that He *could* answer me if the notion struck Him to do so. At that time my most urgent request was that my stories be printed and that I could have a room of my own. . . .

MY MUSINGS brought me no closer to any conclusions regarding the world nor my own duties toward God and man, but I enjoyed—I might say—philosophical fantasies: variations on Spinoza, Kant, Berkeley, and the cabbala, along

all origins which most physicists and astronomers now confess to. And the story itself is taken up where the scientists first begin to make persuasive guesses. The earth is thrown off the sun: it cools: life begins in the ocean: life evolves on land and culminates—so far—in man.

15. But those who believe that this is a summary of the *whole* story are surely confronted by the exact converse of the problem which has tormented so many orthodox believers for so many centuries. Rationalists, materialists and atheists have never yet fully faced the *Problem of Good*.

16. If man had been the product of natural evolution alone he would indeed be a Naked Ape: all his superb intelligence would be directed only to the survival of his own species in a state of

maximum pleasure and minimum pain. He would differ from the other animals *only* by the higher degree of his intelligence.

17. The best we could ever expect would be a society conforming to some old blueprint drawn up by Sidney and Beatrice Webb—a community organised with the maximum intelligence to provide the greatest possible physical and mental satisfaction to all its members.

18. There would be no art in such a society, for art always implies a dissatisfaction with given reality. There would be no religion, for religion is always the yearning for an unachieved condition—of love, of wisdom, of illumination. Men and women would be united by bonds of enlightened self-interest, but there would be no love between

### ... by Isaac Bashevis Singer

with my own cosmic dreams. Since time and space were merely points of view; since quality, quantity, and even existence itself were categories of reason; and since the thing in itself remained completely concealed, there was room left for metaphysical fantasising. My God was infinite, eternal, and possessed of endless attributes, properties of which we humans could only grasp a select few. I didn't agree with Spinoza that all that we know of God are His extension (matter) and His thinking. I was sooner inclined to see in Him other such qualities as wisdom, beauty, power, eternity, and maybe too a kind of mercy that we could never comprehend. The cabalists attributed sex to God, and I more than agreed with them in this concept. God Himself and all His worlds were divided into he and she, male and female, give and take, a lust that no matter how much it was satisfied it could never be sated completely and always wanted more, something new, different.

Since man is created in God's image, man could learn more about God by looking within himself, observing all his aspirations, yearnings, hopes, doubts. I envisioned God as resembling myself. He got much, much love from the Shechina, His feminine counterpart, the angels, the seraphim, the cherubim, the Aralim, the holy wheels and holy beasts, from the countless worlds and souls, but this wasn't enough for Him and He also demanded love from insignificant man, the weakest link in the divine chain whom He exhorted: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

HE WANTS LOVE (as I do) regardless of whether He has earned it. He frequently punishes His creatures but He demands that they forgive Him and acknowledge that all His intentions are of the best. He Himself keeps many secrets yet at the same time He demands total candidness and a full baring of the soul. . . .

MY FATHER AND I STROLLED for a long time in silence.

"Father, what does God want?"

Father stopped.

"He wants us to serve Him and love Him with all our hearts and souls."

"How does He deserve this love?" I asked.

Father thought it over a moment.

"Everything man loves was created by the Almighty. Even the heretics love God. If a fruit is good and you love it, then you love the Creator of this fruit since He invested it with all its flavour. And if someone is a lecher and lusts for females, it was the Creator who bestowed them with their beauty and allure. The sage recognises the source of all the good things and he loves that source. When the fruit rots, you no longer love it, and when the woman grows old and sickly, the lecher runs from her. The fool will not give any thought to where everything stems from."

"What about the evil things? What is their source?"

"There are no evil things. Death which man fears most is a great joy and a blessing to the just."

"What about suffering?"

Father was silent a long time and I assumed that he hadn't heard me, but then he said: "That is the greatest secret of all. Even the saints weren't able to fathom it. So long as man suffers he cannot solve the riddle of suffering. Even Job didn't arrive at the answer. Moses himself didn't know it. The truth is that body and pain are synonyms. How could there be free choice without punishment for choosing evil and reward for choosing what is right? Behind all this suffering is God's infinite mercy."

Father paused and then asked: "Is there a house of worship in the neighbourhood? Time to say the afternoon prayers."

Isaac Bashevis Singer

in his Memoir of Warsaw in the 1920s  
*A Young Man in Search of Love* (1978)

them: for love leads to the pains of separation; to the ultimate anguish of bereavement.

19. Why, then, has such a "utopia" never been achieved? Why would most human beings reject it with horror if it were offered them? Why do men hunger so irrepressibly for love, for beauty, for truth? At least *for struggle*? Why does the totally supererogatory goodness of Jesus or St Francis continue to captivate the imagination even of those who cannot believe in the God of Jesus and St Francis? *Where* did Jesus and the saints find that sublime love which would not only be superfluous in a Naked Ape but deeply destructive of his supersimian contentment?

20. "Naturalistic" interpretations of Jesus or St Francis, of St John of the Cross or St Theresa do not seem blasphemous or even disrespectful. Such accounts of those figures never get near the reality of those extraordinary lives; they seem grotesque in their irrelevance. It is as if someone had given an account of a great picture by a careful description of all its shapes and colours.

21. So this theological story tells of something outside our universe, and of a different kind from it, which is constantly pressing in upon our domain of the senses and trying to introduce the freedom of the spirit into an order of vigorous material necessity.

22. When we think of this "something other" as a force, a state or a domain we call it Heaven: when we think of it as a person we call it God. And just as physicists treat light as either waves or particles according to context, so we talk either of God or of Heaven as it suits us. Yet we are *always* fully aware that whatever words we use will be no better than pointing fingers; gestures of dumb joy; grimaces of bewildered love.

23. One model might be a black and hollow globe surrounded by radiant light; whenever the smallest chink appears in the surface of our globe the light *will* enter, of its very nature. Or we may think of a wise and loving father or mother who is constantly offering strange and inestimable

gifts to sons and daughters who seldom even hear the parental voice, and still more rarely open their hearts and minds to receive what is being offered.

24. The present story tells us that as evolution proceeds, on this or any other planet, so God enters the expanding minds of thinking beings as best he can. (He may have other ways of entering our universe and influencing events here, but the only way we can hope to understand is the way he makes into our own minds.)

25. These divine gifts are prodigious and invaluable, for all of them are of heavenly origin and could not have been the products of any earthly process. The greatest gift is the gift of religious understanding, for this can enable us to receive as much of Heaven's light as we are ever able to receive. Other gifts are inner freedom (for the natural world knows nothing but necessity); the knowledge of good and evil (for the natural world knows nothing but advantage and disadvantage); art; love; a joyful perception of beauty in the uncreated world around us; ardour for truth; redeeming pain. . . . When we see, or feel, these gifts in action surely they seem like mysterious colonists from some more splendid realm of being than our own?<sup>2</sup>

26. So the supreme function of men and women is to receive God's gifts, the light of Heaven, as fully as they can. Some people are congenitally better attuned to the will of God, more permeable to Heaven's light; but all of us can work continually to make ourselves more receptive—by encouraging whatever we can find in ourselves of faith and hope; by prayer and meditation; by reading; by self-attribution; by alert attention to even the most familiar and everyday experiences. But, above all, by practising the art of love. "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly."

27. If we find it hard to reach this God it is not because he coyly, or pedagogically, withdraws himself from us, but because it is as hard for him to penetrate our world as it is for us to receive the radiance of his love. For most of us God is an endless journey.

28. The tragedy of this life is in no way diminished by discovering a God of Pure Love, but the tragedy is not due to God's obscure purposes in tormenting us but to the hard fact that we are truly the creature-victims of a world ruled by unfeeling necessity. Yet the tragedy is now truly redeemable by the accessibility of God's *unequivocal* love.

<sup>2</sup> Thus God is indeed the creator of *man*, in the sense that he has given man everything which is of the least value in him, and which enables him to value truly.

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29. Stupidity, blindness, folly and wickedness form a thick impasto around us through which God can scarcely reach us, even though his effort to do so is never relaxed. (This is clearly a God to whom the phrase "forgiveness of sins" cannot be attached with any meaning whatever.)

30. Many modern theologians have mocked the idea of "a God out there", and many of them have ended up with the man-centred parochialism of suggesting that "God" is simply another term for "our deepest concern" or "the depth of our being."

31. But the present story, while reluctant to use such huge and hollow words as "infinite" and "eternal", records that God/Heaven was there long before the arrival of man on Earth, and will be there long after man's departure. (God may be latent within us all, but he can be brought into loving activity only by our worship of a God whose existence is in no way dependent on our own.)

32. But it seems futile to speculate about the intrinsic nature of God, and it was the tormented efforts of early theologians to do this which led them to create their forbidding structures of creed, dogma, and anathema. New Testament Christianity scarcely concerns itself at all with the inner nature of God and Heaven. The gospels, the Acts and most of the epistles, Pauline or otherwise, are intensely concerned with the mystery of God's dealings with man as revealed by the recorded words, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

33. The first two supplications of the supreme Christian prayer contain the heart of the whole proclamation. "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." For the kingdom is *not yet* come: God's will is, *not yet* done on earth.

34. Indeed if we now read the New Testament in the light of the present story it is extraordinary how little needs to be surrendered; or even reinterpreted. And there are some great utterances which make *more* sense in the light of a God truly revealed by the life of Jesus; truly almighty in love alone. "My grace is sufficient for you: my power is made perfect in weakness." (If God were really a wielder of mighty physical power surely he would choose for his most favoured children those who most resemble him; not the weak, the poor, and the humble but the great kings of the earth, But being himself a persistent suppliant on earth it is to the weak, the humble, and the supplicating that he finds it easiest to come.)

35. The great Heaven-sent utterances of the New Testament surely sound all the louder and clearer once we have banished that Omnipotent Creator and Omniscient Predestinator. "Abide in

me and I in you." "Perfect love casteth out fear." "The truth shall make you free." "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God." "Rise, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead; and Christ shall enlighten thee." "The words I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." "God is spirit, and those that would come to him must come in spirit and in truth." "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." "Seek and ye shall find." "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you."

UNDER A NEW PROCLAMATION of God Almighty in Love Alone there would not have to be any new and outlandish words at Evensong, in Peterborough Cathedral. Not that a merely amended liturgy would bring the football-fans crowding into the cathedral on a Saturday afternoon. But as I listened to the beautiful singing of the choir there a month ago I already felt the presence of that true Christian God among us; and I know very well that many of the celebrants felt his presence far more strongly than I have ever been able to do.

But how can one deny that the proclamation



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was muffled on that occasion, and not only by the bewildering intrusion of Gideon and his god of tribal vengeance? For how can we ever call clearly, out of our affliction, for the loving help of a God who is himself responsible for our affliction? Creatures of earth and necessity, sharing the bitterness of that condition, how much more clearly and truly we could sing to God if we

knew him to be as urgently concerned to give us his unconditional love as we are to receive it. A song of true revival and of faith reborn in new simplicity might, after all, be heard beyond the cathedral walls, beyond the gates of the close, and even as far as the factories and the railway-yards. "From glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."

## Geoffrey Grigson

### Flowers on Silk, by a Feudal Oppressor

A pity—yet as well—this uneducable  
branch of bullace opening

has no chance to emulate or imitate  
the spray Hui-Tsung

compelled to flower, on silk, in snow  
(his signature is written below)

eight hundred and some eighty-six  
comfortless springs ago.

### A Troo, les Lilas

It is possibly a time to fear.  
He is young, he plays a silver flute  
Among the lilacs on the cliff  
And she walks to him with the light  
Shining in her long hair,  
And it seems that consequence,  
Negation, and condition, disappear,  
That *and*, as well as *but* and *if*,  
Has dissolved in this scented air,  
And it is not a time to be  
Cynical and jeer, even though  
Possibly it is a time to fear.