

THIS AND THAT (236)

Secular poems at funerals and weddings are usually dire. Grief dulls critical faculties. So too can joy. I blame websites. But one man's meat is another man's *poisson*.

T S Eliot's friend

I chanced recently upon a poem I am surprised not to have heard at a funeral. By the American poet Conrad Aiken (1889-1973), it is far from dire and well enough known to have been set to music by several composers, including Leonard Bernstein.

Music I Heard

*Music I heard with you was more than music,
And bread I broke with you was more than bread;
Now that I am without you, all is desolate;
All that was once so beautiful is dead.*

*Your hands once touched this table and this silver,
And I have seen your fingers hold this glass.
These things do not remember you, beloved,
And yet your touch upon them will not pass.*

*For it was in my heart that you moved among them,
And blessed them with your hands and with your eyes;
And in my heart they will remember always —
They knew you once, O beautiful and wise.*

An interesting man Aiken. At the age of eleven he experienced a life-warping, shattering tragedy. His father shot his mother and then himself. He records the event in his autobiography: *After the desultory early-morning quarrel, came the half stifled scream, and the sound of his father's voice counting three, and the two loud pistol shots and he tiptoed into the dark room where the bodies lay motionless, and apart, and, finding them dead found himself possessed of them for ever.*

Inclined to insanity

He was fascinated by psychology for the rest of his life. His short story, "Silent Snow, Secret Snow", is a psychological study of a disturbed boy. He claimed it to be "a projection of my own inclination to insanity."

He produced most of his important work in the 1920s and early 1930s. A time of personal upheaval during which he divorced his first wife and attempted suicide. He was a friend of T S Eliot, much influenced by him.

He had wit and a sense of humour. He directed that his tombstone be fashioned as a bench. An invitation to visitors to stop and enjoy a martini at his grave. I love this clever, punning trifle:

*It's time to make love, douse the glim;
The fireflies twinkle and dim;
The stars lean together
Like birds of a feather,
And the loin lies down with the limb.*

The Curate's Egg

The lowly 'curate' has become fashionable. Once he was just the humblest of clergymen. At the bottom of the hierarchical ladder. A mere assistant priest, assumed to be absurdly naïve. Most useful as the butt of clerical jokes.

No longer. Advertisers and spin doctors have taken up and snobbified the word. As a noun not a verb. No more do booksellers present a selection of books to entice us to buy, they 'curate' them. Music festivals are curated, so too news programs. Even fashionable curates like myself need no longer select Sunday's, hymns we can curate them.

The most famous of all curate jokes comes from a 1895 cartoon in Punch by George du Maurier. A curate is sitting at table with his bishop and family. The bishop says: *I'm afraid you've got a bad egg, Mr Jones;* Over anxious not to offend, the curate replies, *Oh, no, my Lord, I assure you that parts of it are excellent.*

An obscene death for Punch

Times have changed and coarsened. Subtlety, nuance, deference and decorum are little regarded.

Even Punch slipped. The final issue, published in 1992, reprinted the famous cartoon, but with a caption that excluded the Bishop's observation entirely. The curate alone remarks: *This ****ing egg's off!*

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TODAY: PALM SUNDAY 25 MARCH 2018

St Nicholas' Chapel, Pilley: 8.00am Holy Communion BCP
St Mary's South Baddesley: 9.30am Holy Communion
St John's Boldre: 10.30am Holy Communion, Palm Sunday
Procession with donkeys Fleur & Floss + Children's Club
St John's Boldre: 6.30pm Choral Evensong

For Prayer This Week

World peace and harmony. Catriona, Stephen and little Hannah in Gahini, Rwanda and their hospital fellow workers.

Prayer requests: John Arthey, Jean Broomfield, Elizabeth Fancourt, Janet, James, Colin Erne, David, Vanessa and Dominic.

Rest in Peace: Peter Chitty, June Gittoes

Activities This Week

Mon 26 Mar - 8.00am Holy Communion St Nicholas' Chapel
Tue 27 Mar - 8.00am Holy Communion St Nicholas' Chapel
Tue 27 Mar - 10.30am Vintage Fitness. Seated exercise to music at St Nicholas' Pilley & refreshment
Tue 27 Mar - 11.00am St John's - Funeral June Gittoes
Wed 28 Mar - 7.00pm St Anne's Brock (RC) - Stations of Cross
Wed 28 Mar - 10.30am Holy Communion St Nicholas' Pilley + coffee
Wed 28 Mar - Bible Study Ph. 07786194282 for venue & time
Thu 29 Mar - 10.30am Vintage Fitness. As on Tuesdays
Thu 29 Mar - 1.30pm - St John's WG School end of term Service

HOLY WEEK & EASTER SERVICES ST JOHN'S

26 March - Monday in Holy Week

8.00am St Nicholas' Pilley: Holy Communion

27 March - Tuesday in Holy Week

8.00am St Nicholas' Pilley: Holy Communion

28 March - Wednesday in Holy Week

10.30am St Nicholas' Pilley: Holy Communion and Coffee

29 March - Maundy Thursday

7.00pm St John's Boldre: Foot washing, Commemoration of Last Supper, Altar Stripping, and Night Watch till midnight by the candle & flower-bedecked Altar of Repose

30 March - Good Friday

2-3pm St John's Boldre: Devotional Service

1 April - Easter Day

8.00am St Nicholas's Pilley: Lighting of Easter Candle & H.C.

EASTER DAY BENEFICE SERVICES 1 APRIL 2018

St Mary's South Baddesley: 6.00am Sunrise Service
St Nicholas' Chapel Pilley: 8.00am Holy Communion BCP
St Mary's South Baddesley: 9.30pm Holy Communion CW
St John's Boldre: 10.30am Holy Communion & Children's Club

BENEFICE GOOD FRIDAY JOURNEY

A PRAYER WALK ON GOOD FRIDAY 30 MARCH

10.00am Family Service at St Saviour's Brockenhurst
10.00am Family Service at St Luke's Sway
1.00pm Lunch at St John's Boldre
2.00pm An Hour at the Cross at St John's Boldre
4.00pm Tea at South Baddesley
5.00pm Tenebrae Service at St Mary's South Baddesley

SIGN UP FOR FOOTWASHING AND WATCH

Sign up on lists by the door to have your foot washed and/or to Watch for ½ an hour on Maundy Thursday night between 8 & 12.

EASTER LILIES

To give an Easter Lily in memory of a loved one or celebrate a birthday or anniversary, contact Annette Ridout 01590 676028 (£3.50 per lily). Names of those remembered will be displayed.

CONFIRMATION CLASSES

Confirmation classes soon. Let the clergy know if interested.