

faith takes you to many strange places

Between Both Worlds Vol.2

BY

Kingsley L. Dennis

ON THE SECOND VOLUME

This present collection of poetry marks the second volume in the 'Between Both Worlds' series - which was begun on my arrival in Istanbul, Turkey - and follows on from the earlier 'Under Istanbul Skies'. The poems given here date from my second academic year in Istanbul: October 1998 - July 1999.

The selection offered here is, as always, carefully chosen from the great number of poems I am constantly scribbling in my notebook. In the attempt not to repeat myself too much, many poems which are on a similar theme remain in the pages of my private notes.

It was commented upon last time that since my poems are coming from the experiences gathered during my time in the city of Istanbul, why are there not more poems revealing a direct sense of place. To answer this I can only say that my poems are often travelling beyond any physical sense of place, for while Istanbul has an interesting life to catalogue, the inner realm of one's thoughts, feelings, and ideas, are an infinite universe. The 'sense of place' can only be the signs and the symbols. The real place, the place where I have always been seeking to travel to, is the source of such signs and symbols.

This second volume in the series was compiled on 12.7.99. As always I send my poetry out to all my close friends in an attempt to let them keep in touch with my perpetual stirrings below: and, as always, I send out my poetry with my deepest love and affection - for friendship and for understanding. Enjoy the read!

Kingsley L Dennis

UNFILLED

I lost the sound of the spirit;
Silence for a while.
The agony of a parent separated
From its child, anxiously
Crying in a natural way.
Internally there is a space,
Unfilled gap, breezy and deep;
Just ever so deep yet going nowhere.

The feeling of losing You, of losing yourself.
I felt this feeling for a time.
It's this kind of time that is without
Those measured moments of hours, minutes.
Unfilled moments, breezy and deep;
Just ever so long yet stopping nowhere.

Like a lover who cannot see the beloved.
A heartbeat with no eternal peace.
Unfilled longing, breezy and deep;
Just ever so strained yet touching nowhere.

I lost the sound of the spirit;
Silence for a while.
Blowing; just blowing and drifting by,
So breezy, breezy and deep.

10.20pm
18.10.98

SAVE ME

Sometimes there's no knowing
Which way the wind is blowing
So save me from this indecision,
Save me from my crime.

I'm not asking for all answers
To be given, truth remains hidden,
But move me from this awkward space,
Transfer me to another place.

It's time to take me one step further,
Time to teach me best foot forward;
So save me from this foolish balance,
Save me from my simple stance.

11.40pm
18.10.98

BEER HALLS & PRAYER CALLS

Beer halls and prayer calls;
the rough men drink whilst the Imam
calls the faithful to their prayer.
Raki-soaked mouths shout abuse at
the football scores unaware that their kin
in every mosque on every Turkish corner
are kneeling upon their holy carpet floors.

Maybe it's a sin what they've done
or just the result of an inevitable bridge
that came to meet the East with its West.
Now we have the Koran mixed with alcohol,
secular religious fanaticism at its best.

10.47pm
19.10.98

HUMAN BRIDGE

We've still kept in touch after
all this time

despite my severing our close ties
when I wanted to fly

to this foreign land out of the West.

Yet thro' phone calls and by letters
and all the sweet pauses

our hands have remained stretched-out
reaching

as a human bridge from my East to your West.

So as you're searching for your love life
as I am my spirit

there's a part of us that has never let it go,
like a fundamental feeling buried beneath our reason

that knows no continents, time, nor season.

11.03pm
19.10.98

THE OLD MEN

They take a mouthful of Raki
(their strong aniseed-flavoured spirit)
then take a sip from their glass of water.

All in all they're just simple folk
who want to talk and pass on daily news.

They're not asking for the constitution to be changed
although they'd like to name a few bad politicians;
and they're not asking for their lives to be different
even though they could swear at many of its moments.

They'll just talk to you, make conversation,
and then offer to pay for the loan of your ears;

because all in all they're the simple folk
who want to drink and pass on through the years.

11.22pm
19.10.98

IN YOUR FLESH

In your flesh
I forget my
prayers.

The sound of the spirit
goes unanswered
as I am lost and tangled

in the coil of your skin,
blinded in the call of your sex
as a veil drawn across my sight.

Lazy with you in your caresses
I forget why it is that I came
and why it is that I should leave you :

Numbed and stunned I lie beside you
like a helpless, fallen creature,
weak in his desire against your desire.

When I am full, penetrating in you,
my heart still resounds, reminding me
of the sounds that my soul is moving :

Unknowingly yet knowingly
like the early attempts of a child
to shield itself, to satisfy itself,

I forget my prayers
when I become
lost in your flesh

and the sound
of the spirit
goes unanswered.

11.07am
24.10.98

WHO WOULD DARE SAY?

My bed now lies bare,
at rest like slumbering Istanbul

And so has this infamous lair
lived a history of conquests too.

In preparation I smooth away the hair
of the old to welcome in the new;

An attempt to build my bridge that is fair
between the continental divides of me and you.

This city and bed combined: who would dare
say that I don't live the spirit of my place?

8.35pm
6.11.98

IF YOUR LOVE IS WHAT YOU CLAIM IT IS

Turkey is the country I'm living in. Istanbul is the place I'm at now. There are many highways before me, many byways beckoning me.

Perhaps I don't love you fully yet,
not as much as I could love you.
So why am I thinking of leaving
before we are finished here?
Maybe there's the possibility we'll
have a better chance someplace else:

if your love is what you claim it is
you won't love me less for leaving here;
you won't love me less for continuing
our conversation in another place.

I've left my city of birth,
placed in shadows my country of origin,
I've loved and left my other loves
for you - could I be more true?

My head is before my feet
on the pilgrim path and the heart
is undergoing the knife:

if your love is what you claim it is
you'll still love me for being without you;
you'll still love me for loving you
in all my stupid, drunken ways.

If your love is what you claim it is
you'll wait for me no matter;
no matter how long it takes me
to finally fall lovingly at our feet.

8.08pm
22.11.98

TAKING IT ALL AWAY

Slowly, ever so slowly,
You are taking it all away
From me: once I needed
Despair and distress to cause
My inspiration to declare itself.
Once I needed to be self-tortured
To find the bowels of my thoughts.

Slowly, ever so slowly,
You are taking it all away
From me: I used to thrive
On my world's solitary way
As though I was the only traveller.
I used to believe that sickness was
An accepted result of human imagination.

Yet slowly, ever so slowly,
You are taking it all away
From me: I am being shown
That the only way to learn
Is by the journey of teaching others.
I am being shown that who
We think we are needs time and experience
To slowly, slowly change itself.

And so, with an unseen hand,
With fingers light and touch beyond me,
You are slowly, ever so slowly
Taking it all away from me.

10.15pm
1.12.98

SUCH PLACES

There are places in your soul
Where old love has made a hole
Not able to be sown up again.

It's a space often returned to
When there's no-one else to be with you
And silent moments are slipping into regrets.

So take a step outside the ever-turning world
To feel the memories that still burn
In their old nostalgic ways,

Yet never forget the reason why you left
For in strange wisdom Fortune knows what is best
And a severed road can never be rejoined.

Still, such places remain in your soul
Where old love has made a hole
Not able to be sown up again.

6.46pm
11.12.98

FAITH TAKES YOU TO MANY STRANGE PLACES

You asked me how I came to be here:
Well, my friend, Faith in something or one
Takes you to many strange places.

10.38pm

14.12.98

TRAVELLING

There are places to travel to
And other places to travel from;
Understand what must be left behind
Before you can find the One.

9.40pm
27.12.98

THE SPIRIT'S PLEA TO THE BODY

Why do you block the way
With your booze, you fool?

Can't you see it's difficult enough
To get through when you're sober?

I need you clear, open, and receiving
If you want to hear my words at all.

It's your choice, my friend: if you don't
Want to play, I'm going home in silence.

3.25pm
1.1.99

BEING LAZY

Being lazy

is letting the

minutes slip by

without counting them.

Without taking these minutes

to mould them into something new,

something exciting and wonderful like

an eternity of minutes squeezed into the

finest and brightest star in our heavens above.

11.50am
25.1.99

MY DEAREST DRINKING COMPANION

Looking for the beautiful
with my sensual eyes, until

'I'm here', you shout,
'Your lover, mother, brother,
your dearest drinking companion.

Do not stay away so long;
why walk away when
I'm right here beside you?'

I say I'm still looking for
the beautiful, and continue walking :
'I'm here', you cry again,
'I'll stay here until you find me.'

And I take my lover, mother,
brother, and my dearest
drinking companion on my
futile outward journey.

2.26pm
1.2.99

GLORY IN ADMIRATION

Sometimes I just
want to be alone,

like a prayer said in whispers
or a thought passing through:

Alone with myself
and comfortable with you.

Sometimes I just
need to be near to me

like sleep on the skin
and a kiss on the eyes.
There is nothing I can despise

when alone with myself
and comfortable with you.

Is it so bad, this silence?
No words to form like clay,
no language to escape and decay.

This is the deepest appreciation
- glory in admiration

when alone with myself
and comfortable with you.

8.27pm
3.3.99

THESE FUNNY WAYS

You knew I had been looking
for you and yet
you stayed silent - why?

Is there a cause for this curse?

I called out your name and you
tried to hide in the timbres
of my voice.

I sat with you endlessly in my thoughts
and you passed the time by
slipping in and out.

There were moments when you let me
smell you - remember those?
But then you left only a fragrance behind.

Why all these funny ways?
Is there a reason for the things
you're doing to me?

10.22pm
7.4.99

THE DENIAL

What would it taste like
to have you linger on my
lips just a little while?

Is there any way I can get
to even the imagination
of such a thing?

I'm sure that just a tiny drop
of this reality wouldn't hurt me
if I tried it.

So why do you deny it to me so?

10.34pm
7.4.99

THE OBJECT

It's been lost a long time,
this thing that I'm looking for.

I don't know where it was
that I first lost it, so I
have to seek in the dark.
It could be anywhere.

There's the possibility that
I never had it at all: this would
really confuse the search.
Do you know where it might be?
Do you have it stored in your cupboards?
I advise you to look - you could have
picked it up accidentally on your way.

For now I'll just have to continue
as I did before - peeping into every
nook and cranny as I pass.

If you ever find it, please let
me know - phone, fax or e-mail
me : I'm not hard to find.

Thanks - and don't forget to
pass on this search to your friends
- it really is a very important object.

8.45pm
10.4.99

LIFE IS A LOVE SONG

Life is a love song
told in endless ways:

this one's for the beauty
in the flesh, the touch;
this one's for the eyes.

Every story tells of a longing;
from troubadour to laureate,
to the disco dance diva.

Every word of love, in every
line spoken - carnal or surreal,
emotional or unseen - is a prayer:

this separation becomes told
in every gesture of the human voice;
the longing, the desire, the greed of need.

Life is just the same love song
retold in endless ways:
the lover waiting for his kiss to return.

10.42pm
10.4.99

I LEFT MY LOVE

I left my love
in a far away place

where I can no longer visit
nor see her face.

Another guest she now entertains
in the absence that I made,

to build up a new history
whilst our book fades.

Yet in my moving on
I am forever returning

for any distance between lovers
only increases the yearning.

I left my love
in a far away place

so that as a pilgrim
I may obtain another's grace.

10.58am

11.4.99

WHAT IT IS NOT

It is a prayer
a silence
a glint
a taste
a eulogy
a longing.

It is not these words,
yet can be caught
for a fraction
by their use

and then flies beyond
them
again.

9.28pm
14.4.99

A PRAYER

Thank You
for feeding my hunger
for quenching my thirst
for giving me something
to reach, to grasp to
no matter how far
away it was.
For letting me begin
but not allowing
me to stop,
for taking away a world
I should not have accepted;
for listening to something
that was barely audible
with such patience.
For all this and endless more
- you can take away
from me now.
Thank You.

9.35pm
14.4.99

THE LOVER'S BELOVED

Having a true lover
is a lifetime's labour:

the aching placed inside
the blood - a disease

to infect and infuriate
with mindless passion.

I'm drunk but I haven't
drank a drop - madness!

See this craziness - born from seed,
stripped and watered to splendid tree:

yes, it's not an easy task
to be the friend of a lover

yet worse still to be in the
passion of a lover's beloved.

10.31pm
20.4.99

BONE MAN

In the world
with everything and nothing
to lose but broken bones.

It's a skeleton
walking these streets smiling
at the bones of others,
wanting something
to lose

something to gain.
Thirsty for a cup of juice
made from love's wine
to find a hole to fill,
making this bone man full again.

When there's nothing
to lose but broken bones
there's nothing to remain
when
they're gone.

2.58pm
24.4.99

i'm here now

sssh...don't shout,
i'm here now:

closer to you than
your own jugular vein.

no need to be loud
when i can hear your

thoughts before being formed.
sssh...i'm here now.

14.15pm
11.7.99