

Baby, Be My Babel

By James Walton

An arrow in the eye changes everything
everything is changed by an arrow to the eye.
Erasmus told us how Giotto won the Pope's commission,
drawing the perfect circle in one gesture
a sweeping flick of wrist, the shot of vodka
in the small of a lover's back sipped while
Death stumbled from the balcony unexpectedly.

At the Monastery of the Holy Cross
He lives on jam doing sweet fuck all;
arrives twenty minutes late in chauffeured velvet
crucifixes reflected in black shades, a cigarette falls in gestured
impatience to open the purple pockets for his keys.
The driver's playing a REM remix in Hebrew
museum doors drag the table edge that can seat sixty.

When the new king slid from the chessboard
those thoughts of Harold hacked by knights arraigned,
in tors so closely packed no move could evade
a scattering spread of hubris a smirk inlaid.
Tilled moments of the fall a history slap to wake
filed bruising words or the cast of mould in image
in truth peasants pissed there when no one was looking.

Vladimir has steeped the tea too long in the rusting samovar
ants are in sugar cubes at his rooms above Haymarket.
I tell him how we rose at Castle Hill to plant a tree of liberty
that would grow Around the World,
instead they hanged us naked in Sydney's streets to show
the folly in a pin prick to the empire's belly.
He listens, easing black spots from between ratchet teeth
a hand restlessly chitters on his knee above the tweed.

I tell him of my father's complaint, at disembarkation the first thing
They did was take the rifles away after six years at sea.
He breathes as a man sucking a straw the stains within the goatee
a lesson in the dangers of even a single indulgence.

Writing Raw

All work appearing below is copyrighted by the author.

The urn on the cedar mantle's funereal, the sculpture there
a brick with mortar hanging redeemed Berliners brought down,
mixed with dust from tram tracks to thicken all of history.

The white hatted interrogator explains that it is not enough,
a better response is needed than knowing the sign at the garage
on the right going north offering Lube until you Wait
was not the answer they were looking for, perhaps a little more bleeding
would bring everything into focus help loosen a recollection
shake sense into the blurring forgetfulness of strange ecstasy
of being wanted this much on the edge of giving in to eternity.

Oh stars of emerald night pillar through my legless resistance
drag the shaft out remove the barb from a failing circumference,
see all the pieces of hammer sickle cross and crescent in the stutter
one door closes another opens on these stains of wilful urine.
Tell this to the Inquisition, answer how angels dive winglessly flying
dodging hearts fermenting in simmering fortitude
there is no freedom without the fear of losing it, Checkmate.

James Walton bio: James Walton lives in the Strzelecki Mountains in South Gippsland, Australia. He resigned from an elected public sector union position to concentrate on writing. In the past eighteen months he has been published in The Age and Sydney Morning Herald newspapers, Eureka Street, BLUEPEPPER, The Wonder Book of Poetry, Australian Poetry Journal, Great Ocean Quarterly, Bukowski on Wry, Australian Love poems, Hubgarden Poetry, A Sudden Presence, Poetry d'Amour, and the Australian Poetry Collaboration. He was shortlisted for the ACU National Literature Prize 2013, and Specially Commended in The Welsh Poetry Competition 2014.