

The Poetry Of David Myatt



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I. An Overview

Of the many neglected aspects of the life of David Myatt perhaps the most neglected is his poetry. Hitherto, academics and especially the many critics of Myatt - from journalists to biased anti-fascists - have concentrated on rumours of his alleged (but unproven) involvement with Occultism, and on his former "extremist" years and thus on his extremist writings and activities as a neo-nazi (1968-1998) and as a radical Muslim (1998-2009) where he in those decades according to an anti-fascist group,

"regularly [got] involved in fights", was a bodyguard for notorious British neo-nazi Colin Jordan, was part of Column 88, "a secretive nazi group that was in reality a state-funded operation designed to cause chaos and violence in the event of a Communist takeover or Russian invasion", and where following "travels in Iran and Iraq, in 2000, he began praising Osama Bin Ladin and Al Qaeda" (1)

and where he went on to become "a key al-Qaeda propagandist". (2)

Yet, as one academic noted Myatt was an "extremely violent, intelligent, dark, and complex individual," (3) A complexity which his poetry, written between 1971 and 2012, reveals.

Thus in order to understand Myatt, beyond anti-fascist propaganda and allegations, and beyond the populist and often biased interpretations of journalists, a review of and appreciation of his autobiographical poetry is necessary.

As JR Wright wrote in her 2003 essay *The Life and Poetry of D. W. Myatt*, (4)

"All artistic creations should be judged on their merits, and while the life and former beliefs, political or otherwise, of the artist may be of interest, they should not cloud one's artistic judgment. In the majority of instances, while the artistic creations are remembered after the death of the artist, their beliefs and political opinions are long forgotten [...]

It is one of the aims of Art to elevate us and raise us up and away from the mundane world. The poetry of David Myatt is decidedly non-political. If it can be categorized, it is "pagan", Nature-loving and empathic. It is also highly individualistic, not to say romantic.

What we find expressed in much of this poetry is a profound desire for a more natural and a more human way of life. We also discover, in his poetry, a sensitive man, in love with Nature, who seems to enjoy the company of women far more than the company of men [...]

It seems that his diverse peregrinations, adventures, travels, wanderings and involvements have inspired his diverse poetry, and it is therefore not surprising that some of his poems are about love, the joy of love, and the sorrow that often arises when love ends."

She then provides some extracts from Myatt's poetry, some of which poetry Myatt himself has rejected, writing in his published collection *One Exquisite Silence*, that

"My poetry was composed between the years 1971-2012, and is of varying quality. Having undertaken the onerous task of re-reading those poems that I still have copies of, there are in my fallible view only around a dozen that I consider may possibly be good enough to be read by others. This collection contains these few poems, and most are autobiographical in nature." (5)

In that *One Exquisite Silence* collection - and in his *Four Forgotten Poems* (6) which I consider are most certainly "good enough to be read by others" - there is something ineluctably pagan and redolent of our Western culture: an appreciation of Nature, of personal love, of a Faustian-type personal quest, of Western non-Christian mysticism, of the love poems in the *Carmina Burana*, of the "wandering minstrel" (the itinerant poet) and of the troubadours with their themes of romance and love.

As I wrote in regard to a 2016 premature announcement of his death, if Myatt is to be remembered

"it should, perhaps, be for such so very human, so very civilized, poems. For such poems are such an eloquent rebuke to those who have attempted - or who for private or for political reasons may well continue to attempt - to besmirch him." (7)

Richard Stirling
July 2019

- 1) See the report titled *State of Hate 2019* issued by the anti-fascist "Hope Not Hate" group, pp. 84-85.
- 2) "Far right hate is spiralling out of control", *The Independent*, February 18, 2019.
- 3) Raine, Susan. *The Devil's Party* (Book review). *Religion*, Volume 44, Issue 3, July 2014.
- 4) Included below. The author has slightly revised the text for publication here.
- 5) ISBN 978-1484179932. Also available as a gratis open access pdf document at <https://regardingdavidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/one-exquisite-silence-v1.pdf>

This collection was first circulated privately in 2012 and was mentioned by former White House speech writer Ben Coes in his novel *Power Down*, ISBN 9780312580742.

It should be noted that the *One Exquisite Silence* collection was also published under the title *Relict*.

6) These four poems are included in Part III.

7) <https://regardingdavidmyatt.wordpress.com/2016/11/15/david-myatt-relict/>

II. The Life and Poetry of D. W. Myatt

The poetry of DW Myatt is the creative work of a man with an interesting history. His life, according to one source, is a modern "odyssey". Currently (January 2003) he lives and works on a farm in England, having announced

his intention to live a quiet, contemplative, rural life.

All artistic creations should be judged on their merits, and while the life and former beliefs, political or otherwise, of the artist may be of interest, they should not cloud one's artistic judgment. In the majority of instances, while the artistic creations are remembered after the death of the artist, their beliefs and political opinions are long forgotten.

Outwardly, Myatt's Promethean quest - involving as it did a study of Martial Arts, the violence of ultra-nationalist politics, periods as a vagabond, two terms of imprisonment, personal involvement with Islam, Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism, Christianity, paganism, the Occult - is now generally known.

Inwardly, his personal life is much less well-known. It may have been that his first period as a vagabond was prompted, in part, by a series of ultimately unhappy romantic liaisons, one of which led to the young woman in question moving abroad where she gave birth to Myatt's daughter. This series of events does seem to have inspired some of his poetry, as did his first marriage, which failed when his wife ran off with a younger woman (who, incidentally, was the dedicatee of Myatt's translation of Sappho's poetry).

His second marriage ended with the death, at the age of 39, of his wife from cancer. The failure of his third marriage led him to spend another period as a homeless vagabond, in the hills and Fells of Cumbria, a period which inspired him to produce more pagan poetry before he returned to writing about that second love of his life, women. For if there are two themes which consistently run through his poetry, they are Nature, and women. Indeed, he once remarked that "I often feel that some women embody the beauty, the numinosity, the joy, the sensuality, of Nature."



This love of women is especially evident in his recent short story novel entitled *One Connexion* (1), in a manuscript he wrote over two decades ago - about a relationship involving two women - to which he gave the title *Breaking the Silence Down*, in several of his poems, and in many of his letters to me:

"So it was that I then, as now, remembered a wisdom of years ago, forgotten in the artificial turmoil of political, religious, plots, of chasing ideological schemes and promethean dreams. Remembered especially when I, only months ago, in her, my married lover's house, awoke and she, my new love, lay warm, naked and

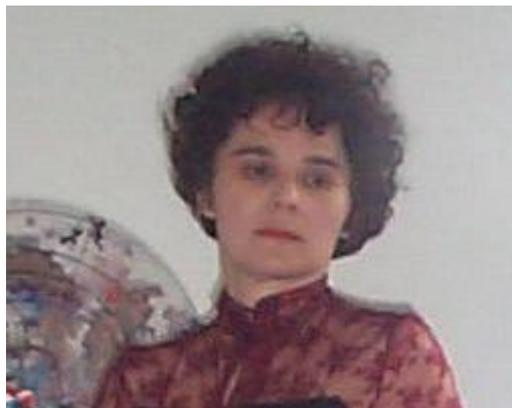
half-asleep beside me, our limbs, our bodies, our feelings, entwined, and there was no need to speak, to leave. We seemed one, then, as when our passion joined us and we would lie, wordless, looking, smiling, gently moving, touching, in that beautiful calmness of love." *A Learning*: Hand written letter, by Myatt, addressed to JR Wright, dated *Nearing the Winter Solstice*; postmarked December 17 2002. (2)

It is one of the aims of Art to elevate us and raise us up and away from the mundane world. The poetry of David Myatt is decidedly non-political. If it can be categorized, it is "pagan", Nature-loving and empathic. It is also highly individualistic, not to say romantic.

What we find expressed in much of this poetry is a profound desire for a more natural and a more human way of life. We also discover, in his poetry, a sensitive man, in love with Nature, who seems to enjoy the company of women far more than the company of men, and who finds:

There is much that is beautiful
But nothing that surpasses the beauty some women
Reveal
Through their eyes

(The Silent Wisdom)



It seems that his diverse peregrinations, adventures, travels, wanderings and involvements have inspired his diverse poetry, and it is therefore not surprising that some of his poems are about love, the joy of love, and the sorrow that often arises when love ends:

It was a calm night
Perfumed by moon
Which drew droplets of fractured
Light to my pillow and relief
To the majesty of her flesh

(Summer Love)

Only in passion did we glimpse in moments a beauty
Beyond -
As when, satiated within our lover's arms,
Our being relaxed to journey in defiance of our life
To where some gods were born
While rain played as rain played upon those panes of glass
And a Church clock tolled its ten amid the morning city noise
In her Apartment
When we who waited warm in bed should long ago
Have been upon our way to work.

(Only Relate)

I have no sentence of undisputed meaning
To describe the feeling
As I entered to hear the organ playing Bach:
There was no Time
No century of belonging
Only a leaving in an inward implosion
As I stood, unaware of who or what I was.

But she was real, this goddess
Who played with thin fingers
Creating in an instant a divinity
Of love
Her wraith form almost swathed in black:
She looked up, once, as I sat astounded,
And smiled in concentration.

(Playing Bach)

Three weeks to dream
As life ebbs as a life ebbs.
I'm glad we went to Egypt -
Her first words
Following that fatal verdict.

Now, forward four weeks,
Her strength mostly gone,
She sleeps as I remembering
Watch
Almost crying
And yearning for times past
Like those Summer days
We remembered yesterday
When we had sat together
Amid the heat in our colourful garden
At peace beneath a sky of blue.

(Meanings)

I had gone, unannounced, unexpected,
To see them kiss as they stood
Near her window.

Each false Spring is a lesson
Which Nature slowly learns
As harsh Winter in returned
When stark frost, chilling,
Creeps to crack some bursting buds:
Poems cannot change this
Just as Summer is not Summer
Without Spring

(Shadow Game)

But no spell, no wish
Brought my distant lover to me
And I was left to run slowly
Back
And wait the long hours
To Dawn.

By the fire, I think of nothing
Except the warmth of my love
No longer needed.

(In The Night)

Always a dream or a memory
Lead us on
And we wait like children
Trusting in the spirits of the Earth.
We love unsuspecting
While they our lovers scheme,
Succour themselves on our blood
And bleed us dry

(Letter)

In his later years, following the development of his mystical philosophy of pathai-mathos, Myatt destroyed his copies of all of his poems except for the seventeen included in his collected titled *One Exquisite Silence* (also published under the title *Relict*) and the ones in his *Four Forgotten Poems*. For, as he wrote at the beginning of the *One Exquisite Silence* collection he considered his other poems "not good enough to be read by others".

Such a self-judgment aside, if Myatt is to be remembered it will hopefully be for his poetry, rather than for his political or religious writings, or his quest among the religions of the world.

J. R. Wright
Oxford
5 January 2003
(Revised 2019)

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(1) Editorial Note: The story is available at
<https://regardingdavidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/dwm-one-connexion.pdf>

One of the women in the story was the inspiration for Myatt's well-known poem *One Exquisite Silence*. The web-page and website given in the pdf file are now (2019) defunct.

(2) Editorial Note: The letter is included in the collection
<https://regardingdavidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2015/05/myatt-letters.pdf>

III. Four Forgotten Poems by David Myatt

The Returning

All seasons transcend
Since each day differs
Through its cloud and its sun.

In the wood, gold spreads
Slowly
Like the slow death it is
As every soft colour is returned.
Only pasture remains green
Below mist
While brown earth is broken
By plough:

Sufficiency is shelter itself
And the once reluctant farmer nods
As he turns with his bent back
Where sun rests
Between its hill and his home.
It will be gone, soon, this sun
Lost
While stars stare down the sky
Where for fifty years
His house has stood
Stone grey among muddy sheep-torn grass.

There was a horse, then,
To plough the steep slope
Of his hill: a different way
When even the village
Fifteen furlongs west
Was wary of all change.

But shelter is sufficiency itself
He knows
As he walks the short path
To his home.
There will be fire,
A son's warm wife
To welcome this leathery skin.

He is old, he knows,
Worn like the oak, and his path
Which three years of bloody hands
Tore from Her earth
And which each year She renews.

All rain can be smelt

In the wood, wind spins
Slowly, like Earth.
There is a mist, a mingling
While the fallen man waits among leaves
Like Her kestrel
For death.

Every wind is his breath.

(c.1984)

o o o o o

A Warm Day One Spring

In the hills
Where heat haze is scattered
By wind
Wisdom sits like the shepherd
Waiting;
No words suffice
While bleached bracken
Scratches beneath blue.

Nearby, heather sprouts

Where silty shales chewed
By frost
Crumble slowly like life:

There is no haste
Where eighty years of wind
Have twisted the small Douglas tree
Like this Peregrine twists
Itself in flight:

 Somewhere a death

While on the road below
Two cars scurry
Noiseless like lice:
Soon they will rust
Just as I will be bleached bones
And dust.

Little endures
Like this rock
(c.1984)

o o o o o

Travelling

A hot day in Summer as I walk
Slowly
But fastly sweating
Down this road
While speeding traffic passes
As speeding traffic does:
The drivers seem unaware or careless
Of my slowness
And grimly swerve to almost
Touch me
Here where a town - ten miles distant - creeps
Over a river to spread across
A narrow greening plain.

 There is food in the town,
 A path's beginning to take me upward
 And turning through a forest
 To the sheep-sided hills
 Beyond.

Slowly, my world passes -
I cannot comprehend the rush
And sit in the hot sun on a low wall
Having passing through the breathless body
Of this town.

Even my water is warm
And suspicious faces watch me
As their owners in gardens surround themselves
With sound:
There seems a rushing in the seeping loud
Music, a barrier
To keep my slow moving solitary travelling world
Away -
I smile, but my beard, my worn clothes -
Perhaps my eyes - mark me.

A few hours
And it is good to be alone again
Among the peace of hills
Where my walking slowness seems to frame
Each slowly passing world:

Above - clouds
To herald some future rain.

(1975)

o o o o o

Remembering

Haunting
As the cry of the owl
Within the frost of night
When I walked to this stream
With no moon:

I saw your face as I waited for dreams,
Tired by my waiting:
You the ghost walking the path
Of my life.

Sun came, slowly, bringing
A little mist around the stream,
A spreading calm to make me stretch
And walk like an old man
Bent by cold and doubt.

Here in the valley no trees exist
To greet in wakeing this Winter's sun -
There is only frost-bruised heather
And fern,
No song
Of birds, only
The timbre of stream.

Slowly, cold-raw hands

Transform a little warmth
From my dream:
How many more nights shall I need
To remember
Until I cannot forget
Again?

(1987)

oooooo

cc David Myatt 1972-2012 ce

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