

Gradbach Chapel

Do not linger here.
How do I say this, so you can hear?

I tear up pages and crumple my words into tight balls,
in confusion, anger, and in despair.
Laughingly, I realise that in reading these words
you are lingering here.

What is this chapel?
A crumbling gravestone to past faith?
With it's fifty-two pegs to hang clothes and forty -two neglected
wall-nails. Will you count them too?

Will the rostrum's benefactor's generosity beyond memory,
make any difference to our lives?
In my vulnerability ,
I weep and cry, allowed, out loud and silent.

Linger not here, with the damp and decay...
Not an instruction to you,
But for preservation.
I want to feel safe.

John Bradshaw

The words uttered, prophesied and threatened,
words full of wrath, intolerance , prejudice and discrimination
might leap out of these walls,
and strike me again.

Today, maybe the words are different.
Occasional, congregating, acknowledging:
life and death, blizzard and drought, famine and feast,
may bring some tenuous warmth.

The incongruous notice-board,
fresh papers on top of decay,
brings possibilities of changes and reconciliation.
Perhaps.

I choose rather to go out the door.
I allow the clunk of the handle to bid adieu
to this building,
as I willingly face the outside .

I joyfully dip my feet into the Dane,

I touch untroubled moss, and sniff the carefree spattering of the
rooks, cawing and circling overhead.
Magic is real.

Looking up,
I admire the bridge's skilfully constructed arch,
Linking one side to the other,
Getting to, getting away, moving on.

I have passed this way, many a time,
and not gone within.
I give thanks for this community endeavour,
and the shelter the chapel may bring.

Tomorrow,
Perhaps you will scatter my ashes here?

John