

WRITING ON THE THEME – A BRICK IN THE WALL

I am a brick in the wall. I would prefer to be a brick on my own, or a rock on my own. I long to be a hermit for a while in some wild place, enjoying the scenery and chilling. But that is not my state; I am a brick in the wall and I suppose I will be till I shuffle off the proverbials. The brickness is maybe due to me being a townie. Country bred people are different. They grew up with space. When you are born into a crowd with Irish on one side and Jewish on the other and a broom by the door so you could knock on the ceiling if upstairs are making too much noise, then you get the edges knocked off, and like the Japanese, who live in paper houses, you get very careful about protecting the privacy of others. You learn to fit in. A Japanese will fold into herself and do a lot of Origami. I will become a brick.

When I was young I had the music that I liked, and all the old people, teachers and parents and uncles, didn't find it musical at all and hated it. So when my oldest became a teenager I expected he would have his own music that I would be able to disapprove of, but it was Pink Floyd, Another Brick in the Wall. He went to a concert at the London Arena. We waited outside in the car to pick him up in case there were drugs and rabble. No, he said. All the people in there were old, like you. He still liked the music.

If I'm going to have to be a brick, it'd better be the right kind of wall.

There are walls that exclude or imprison. There are wall that keep the light form the poor devils living under them. Don't let me be in one of those.

And there are walls that support and shelter. A brick can't give a lot of support but a wall can; it gets its strength and stability from all the interlinked and interlocking other bricks. If you look closely at a wall, each of the bricks is a bit different; surface texture, different shades developed in the kiln. That's why it pleases.

But do you think just one would be missed? Just one gone wouldn't make that much difference.

I could do all sorts on my own; doorstep, paperweight, propper-up of flower pots. Actually it doesn't seem a very long list.

Or I could go to the Tate. I could just stand there on my end as a post modern comment on that other pile of bricks, emphasising the essential aloneness of the great artist that is me.

I could win the Turner prize.

Mary King

Just another brick in the wall, he said

I said there was an elegance to walls; that people considered walls to be bricks directly stacked on top of bricks but if they were constructed in this way the wall would collapse.

The elegance in bricks is that they show the work. No matter how heavy the burden there is always another brick in the wall with his or her shoulder braced.

They live together in a perfect communion of stasis.

The only losers, if such a term is relevant, are the ones at the top, because their whole row could be removed and the wall would remain.

The same can't be said about the bottom or the middle.

He said I'd like to drive a wrecking ball.

I said there's no elegance in destruction.

He smiled and said - there is the way I do it.

Joe Rennie