

Classic Poetry Series

Graham Duncan

- poems -

Publication Date:
2012

Publisher:
Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

Graham Duncan(1923 --)

A Theory Of (Nearly) Everything

The world, we now hear,
is all bits and pieces
that somehow cohere
(or only appear to),
on scales at once cosmic,
subatomic, and common
(some subsubs still to be sung),
all, all bundled up,
indubitably one,
each piece in its groove,
each string in its skein,
and proved on all tiers,
all bits fitted together,
without fuss or pain,
on one common tether
in synchronous stasis or flux
as scopes (tele or micro)
and colliders suggest.
The proof? That's what we crave,
a thesis that's proved
to the commonsense gang
and to physicists all,
the pro and con stringers,
met as bellringers
sweetly united, at last,
in one final big bang,
an astrophysical blast.

Graham Duncan

About Doors

about how they open and close,
but sometimes are hard to open
again, or, once open, to close,
at least tightly; how some walls
are painted to look like doors,
convincingly so, but will not
swing wide, the knob stubbornly fixed;
how we hope doors will shut
something firmly in or out;
how a back door defines those who
use it; how a side door can serve
better than some fancy front doors
(the ones we know are all front):
how a door in the floor can trap;
how we discover soon or late
there are no Open Sesames,
that all doors but the weather kind
are more trouble than they're worth;
how you know there's one door that
will open only once and only for you.

Graham Duncan

Every Infant's Blood

Every tree is an ancestor tree,
not just grandfather redwoods.
Every sapling, every sprout,
carries that majesty,
the dissolution of stone and bone,
of mold and leaf and tongue,
flowing as freely as blood
in earth's leisurely body,
the oldest and slowest rhythms
crooning in its ways.

But who can sing with maple and beech
in the cold wind's demanding meters?
The crimson and gold of their dying fall
choke the singing of our blood.
We cling to the tree of our moment,
weep for its unleaving; our mothers
and brothers, so recently fallen,
neither flow in the roots
nor creep upward under the bark
nor come to rest in orderly rings.

We know where our flesh is buried,
know the place and mark it,
but also know the repetend,
know the flesh will bend
to the root, creep in the trunk,
sing in the leaf,
fall and repeat itself,
old as every wizened oak,
old as the sap and sea salt
in every infant's blood.

Graham Duncan

Wraith In The Checkout Line

I am the wraith.
For a moment I belong
to the woman behind me,
tall, slim, erect,
her face lined, hair gray.
She says, after I turn
to look at her and we both
smile at the cashier's flurry
of beset moves as the line
grows, 'You remind me of my
father, the way you carry
yourself.'

I carry the weightless
burden. She does all the work,
fusing her father's manner
to mine, or mine to his.
I can't help it. I grin.

She sees me as I have seen
my father seated at a bright
window ten years after he died,
embodied by an aging stranger,
there in feature and manner.
I did not speak but know
the impulse, satisfied then
with silence and now
with this shared moment
of stillness
amid the cashier's
frantic ringing up.

Graham Duncan