



POEMS

LINES WRITTEN AFTER VISITING CHÂTEAU SAINT-AIGNAN

We walked, side by side, our thoughts conjoined twin-like,
Eyes roaming silently amongst giants in the green arboretum.
Either side stood a cedar, each dwarfing little giants:
Chestnuts, cobnuts, olives, gladioli and so many more.
Two men barely totalling one hundred and forty years;
A few rings embedded in one lone cedar's trunk oblivious of our short term.
We – both, not one – were but a minute or two in the green centuries shading us.
We talked as ageing walkers do as if the speed of words balanced the slowing legs.

We reminisced and laughed – wondering why humans laughed at pasts gone and wept at futures to come.

We discussed every moot point in infinitesimal detail and solved centuries old questions
From every culture and beyond – wondering how our erstwhile selves did not know.
Each cedar silently looked down and inwardly laughed at what it had seen and what we did not know,
Reiterating in whispers, its susurrations intoning, 'Life is good! Life is good!'
And we wandered on in a circular direction to see each tree in different perspectives.
Sunset to one side and glorious full moon to the other causing our works to stand still.

He explained that one day was four seasons with heat, falling leaves floating on the breeze, pelting rain and chilly eve.

And I thought, 'Let us continue to walk and keep this moment alive,
For we have but a short time in this beautiful soil – much less than trees that thrive;
Time to wander amongst so many green friends that never seem to die;
Wondering on this, that and much else for answers to that eternal 'Why?'
For when we have gone and joined the host of pasts we laughed at by the by
Those majestic trees will stand aloft smiling down on our children wondering, in turn, 'Why?'

We walked till the sun took his leave
And the wide faced moon gloried in her beauty;
Shadows changing shape and size.
And we continued in our silent talk so wise
Ending all with a glorious earth birthed and sun scorched glass of wine,
And, despite our weary bones, felt all was just fine!

Faysal Mikdadi

COME, TAKE MY HAND AND WE WILL WALK

Come, take my hand and we will walk
Through the terrain of your mind.
Back through the years of memories stored therein.
Do you see this one? Just here. Hiding under
The stacks of shelves; trying to lose itself, frightened
To let its light shine and remind you of the child you were.
See, here is the time you frolicked on the shore, your
Hair flowing free behind you and the peals of laughter like
Ribbons of sheer joy rising up to greet the sun.
They were good times now stashed away
Because you've lost who you really are.

Come, take my hand as we walk through the
Terrain of your mind with its multicoloured recollections.
This dark corner must needs be lit; here, the saddest thoughts reside
Eating, growing plump on your fearfulness.
See, here is the shame, the anger, the regret
Tying you, keeping you from your inner spark's in
Glow. Look them in the face: see them for other people's
Shackles on you. Talk with them, dismiss them, repackage them
As strength. Remind yourself that you are not their sum.
There, see the jealous lies of those who wished you ill depart
And die because your sun burns their falsehoods.

Come, take my hand as we walk through the
Terrain of your mind delving deep into its recesses.
Here, where the mind subconsciously packs and unpacks
And unpicks the connections to your soul

Until, in time renewed, across the ages of your life
There is a peace descended; tranquility layers its dust across
The memories of pain and plants seedlings of hope which
Grow, flower, repair and spread joy in your heart
And soul; which, coming to bloom, reveal your 'you'
In all its endless glory.
Come, hold my hand now anew with head held high.

Susan Walpole