

# **DOSSHOUSE BLUES**

**JOHN O'LOUGHLIN**



# DOSSHOUSE BLUES

By  
**JOHN O'LOUGHLIN**  
Of Centretruths Digital Media  
DM P  
CDM Poetry

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## Preface

My first real collection of poems, written on and off during 1973–75, reflects the lyricism and formal simplicity of youth, showing the influence of poets like Rimbaud, Ezra Pound, Adrian Henri, and even Doors lead singer Jim Morrison on my formative years as a writer.

A modest but by no means insignificant start to my literary vocation, which began pleasantly enough in Merstham, Surrey, before progressing first to Finsbury Park and then to Crouch End in north London (where I got the inspiration for the title poem). *Dosshouse Blues* will intrigue those who have personal experience of the horrors of solitary life in cheap lodgings.

John O'Loughlin, London 1976 (Revised 2022)

## *God's Sacrifice*

Her Bible was a crown of thorns,  
Her prayer debarred a mate,  
She never saw the beast with horns  
Who piped away her fate.

Her beauty blossomed like a tree  
Whose fruit for man was ripe,  
But, though she hankered after me,  
She couldn't hear him pipe.

The Cross she bore was never raised,  
The flesh was never torn,  
And though of God she always praised,  
Proud Pan would tap a horn.

He tapped the louder when, one day,  
A lady's man passed near.  
Oh God, with beauty plucked away,  
No favours did she hear!

Instead she heard the pipes of Pan,  
And though she blocked her ears  
She knew her lover was no man,  
The piper kissed her tears.

## *Song of the Vicar's Daughter*

My father is a vicar,  
A vicar's toast is he.  
He chain-smokes like a trooper,  
But gives his love to me.

With Sunday worship on his plate,  
A prayer book on the stand,  
He staggers to the pulpit  
On legs that need a hand.

Then down behind the lectern,  
To help his sermon soar,  
He tucks away the whisky  
That keeps his throat from sore,

As "Praise the Lord for His good gifts  
To mortals here below,"  
Booms forth upon those ruddy lips  
Where cherished blessings glow!

## *Unrequited Love*

If I were to run to the ends of the earth,  
Escape the place where love was blind,  
An image of you would stay in my mind,  
Regret would make war on mirth.

If I were to laugh until, on bended knee,  
I cut my ears and let them bleed  
Or throw to the winds all the things I need,  
You'd still be around to haunt me.

If I, on request, were to slave for gold,  
Recapture health in wine and bowl,  
Then sell for a profit my body and soul,  
Your face would stay young while mine grows old.

## *The Lover's Dream*

Let us go to peaceful places  
Far away from city dope,  
Let us seek the distant faces,  
Lands and climes that feed our hope.

Discontent contracts our jaws  
As the day fades into night.  
Where will we be when its laws  
Change from darkness into light?

What respect is good advice  
If boredom be the judge?  
What sane man would sacrifice  
His freedom for a grudge?

If in time we are together,  
Travelling through the day,  
If in time we share each other,  
Love will find a way.



## *Solicitation*

Give back, my love, that fleshy bowl  
That I may fill it up  
With lovers' dreams, fresh from the soul,  
And drink its body wine.  
Do not withhold, sweet sister, please,  
I grant that you are fine.  
When we have drunk and rest at ease  
We shall refill the cup.

Tomorrow brings another rage,  
Another lonely hell  
Whose sadness you must camouflage  
With educated skill,  
Or act the part of happiness,  
Who laughs and drinks her fill,  
Not be derided by the stress  
Of what your senses tell.

The gift of love cannot be bought  
With worldly goods alone.  
The food of love cannot be sought  
By dreaming overmuch.  
In short, love is a sacred thing,  
As pure as sight or touch,  
And when it comes, sweet sister, sing  
Its praises in the bone.

## *A Vindication*

In you perfection has its place  
Among the treasures of your worth  
Where, smiling, you alone could trace  
Exquisite thoughts back to their birth,  
And cast a glance on mirrored face  
Reflecting beauty, joy, and mirth.

You spoke of places far away  
Where temples "range in lunacy",  
And though 'twould be unwise to say  
That you had been their ecstasy,  
That spirits spread along the way  
Had praised your feet's supremacy,

I can't help feeling that your grace  
Improves each building where you tread,  
And that, if beauty shows its face  
When fastened to your lovely head,  
The only sense these lines can trace  
Is one that leads to love instead.

## *Regret*

As night deports the uncouth day's satire  
And sets a spark of romance to my breast,  
An image of the one whom I think best  
Begins to kindle flames of my desire.

Her voice is sweeter than the sweetest lyre,  
No music soothes the heart as well as she,  
No potion grants a better fantasy  
Than she who stirs my heart into a fire.

And yet 'tis only dream! I must be fool  
To waste away in selfish thought. What tear  
Could bring us close again, what tool  
Could carve her shape and make appear  
That priceless smile, what wish could give it breath,  
And die each night a sweeter death?

## *To A Painting*

If miracles were my domain,  
Dear lady of the Plastic Muse,  
Your charms would know still better use,  
They wouldn't stay long *there* in vain!

When painting gave you form, some years  
Ago, it framed your soul in strife.  
I only wish it'd given you life,  
That sound could reach inside your ears.

For who would think that blindness hides  
Behind those brilliant eyes, that sight,  
In fact, was never there, when tides  
Of hope flow-in upon my mind  
To ebb as doubt that I could ...