

DOSSHOUSE BLUES

JOHN O'LOUGHLIN



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By
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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 ...