

THE MODERN DEATH



John O'Loughlin

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By

JOHN O'LOUGHLIN

Of Centretruths Digital Media

CDM Poetry

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PREFACE

Dating from 1984, this collection of forty-four poems continues in the free-verse style of *Spiritual Intimations* (1983), albeit the verse is usually prevented from degenerating into prose through the application of a methodological consistency which continues to favour the definite/indefinite article at the expense of lesser words.

More significant of this collection is its greater concern with metaphysics, or subatomic theories, which, though far from definitive, enabled me to dig beneath the surface of my themes to what I hoped would be their spiritual or emotional depths.

In retrospect, I can see how much ground I still had to cover – or perhaps I should say uncover? – in order to arrive at *the* Truth, and an even more specific concept of metaphysics. But this was still a significant stage in my progress as a metaphysical thinker, even if, paradoxically, it took a poetic turn.

John O'Loughlin, London 1984 (Revised 2022)

Salvation From

Man needs saving from so many things,
But here are some of the things
That theocratic Centralism
Would endeavour to save him from:
Democracy, Christianity, the State,
Nationalism, internationalism, tribalism,
Socialism, capitalism, materialism,
Nature, marriage, sex, disease,
Destitution, unemployment, poverty, despair,
Dogs, cats, horses, ponies,
Warships, bombs, guns, tanks,
Clocks, watches, hammers, mallets,
Skirts, dresses, high heels, make-up,
Overcoats, macks, ties, collars, lapels,
Rhythms, harmonies, orchestras,
Conductors, classical, romantic,
Rock, punk, soul, funk,
Academies, theatres, concert halls,
Galleries, paintings, sculptures,
Prisons, houses, churches, pubs,
Graveyards, tombs, death,
Cars, trucks, bicycles, mopeds,
Coal, smoke, oil, tar,
Alcohol, tobacco, pipes, cigars, cigarettes,
Racing, gambling, speculating,
Stock markets, stockbrokers, banks,
Money, deposits, shares, and millionaires.
Not a complete list by any stretch of
The poetic imagination,
But a slight indication
Of what is probably still to come!

Theocratic Convoy

Myself, if I were the leader of
A Social Transcendentalist Centre,
That radically-theocratic
And free-electron ideological entity,
I would prefer to travel about by 'chopper'
Or motorbike than by car.
Imagine a convoy of black limousines
Heading from the leader's headquarters
To wherever he wants/has to go.
Isn't there something bourgeois
And starkly middle-of-the-road about
Such a mode of transportation, better suited
To democratic prime ministers and presidents
Than to theocratic leaders?
Why should he be driven about like a bourgeois,
As though partial to expensive cars,
When he would be more in his ideological element
With a motorbike, even if in a sidecar?
Wouldn't he be partial to zipper jackets,
Since beyond the use of button-up coats,
And wouldn't they prove more relevant
To motorbikes than to cars?
Yes, I dare say they would, since connoting,
Like bikes, with a transcendental bias,
Symptomatic of a theocratic extremism.
So for short trips from, say,
One part of town to another,
A convoy of motorbikes,
Their riders clad in black,
A kind of elite bodyguard – booted, helmeted, armed,
The leader somewhere in the middle of the convoy,
Well-protected at all times.
And for long trips, a 'chopper',
Well-protected in the air and monitored
From the ground – fast and transcendent.

Nuclear Fission

You don't get to a free-electron society
Without splitting the atom,
And if the world *is* to be brought
Closer to a post-atomic status,
Then the atom will have to be split,
Since nuclear fission
Is conducive to such a status
And can only be appropriate to an age
In which the societal atom has to be split,
An age transitional between atomic relativity
And electron absolutism.
A world in which the societal atom
Had been split would be very different
From the one currently in existence.
It would be a much more interiorized world,
In which artificial criteria
Considerably preponderated over natural criteria.
For you don't get to the Supernatural
By being dependent on nature!
Willy-nilly, life will have to go forwards,
Irrespective of whatever
Reactionary naturalists and atomists now think.
Man will increasingly live off his own oxygen,
Food, drink, synthetic resources,
And thus become Superman,
Independent of nature – Supernatural!

The Modern Death

Literature is deep and anguished,
But pseudo-literature is shallow and smug.
Literature allows one to peer
Into the anguished heart
Of its principal character,

Pseudo-literature hinges upon the smug sociability
Of its superficial characters.
There is criticism in literature,
A deep, penetrating criticism of man and society,
A 'Steppenwolfian' revolt of
The higher spirit against the world.
Pseudo-literature may, if Marxist,
Criticize the bourgeoisie,
But it will glorify the proletariat
And their social/industrial achievements.
Literature reveals what lies hidden beneath
The veil of expedient custom and politeness.
Pseudo-literature's only concern is with the veil,
The performance of everyday society.
If literature is akin to
The soulful kernel of creative writing,
Then pseudo-literature is the materialist husk.
If literature is essence,
Then pseudo-literature is appearance, reflecting
The degeneration of the novel
From profundity to superficiality, commensurate with
A progressively more commercial tendency.
Literature is dead or dying,
But pseudo-literature proclaims ...