

Peter Hammill, Faint-Heart And The Sermon

With my face drained of colour
and my brain of blood,
like Billy Budd
I'm lashed to the grating.
With senses growing duller
and with quaking heart
I make a start
at temperature equating
and my lungs suck useless air.

Like paraplegic dancers
in formation team
my understanding seems
hidebound in its movements,
contemplating answers
that could break my bonds -
to be half wrong
would be, in me, improvement...
but my comprehensive faculties are impaired.

And it seems absurd, but now all I've heard
fades in empty words and is worthless
as the Human Laugh rocks the cenotaph
but the joke is half-true, and mirthless.

Trying to trace a reason
from the spinning words
but all I've heard
seem at odds with their meanings,
phonetically pleasing
but delivered in such haste
that in their place
my mind commences screaming.

On the verge of belief I crash onto the reef
and a cynical thief steals my senses.
So I cling to the pew with dimensions askew,
and recognition refuses present tenses.
All the lives of the saints demonstrate that my faint
is a minor complaint, but the end is
nowhere in sight.
Why can't I find me a way to go?

I don't want to die in the nave,
but I know it may be with me some day
so I've got to find a way I can save up
my energies, and find a cause to pray
to something for something
to which I can give my creed.

I'd gladly succumb to the wave,
if I thought the water taught a way to light;
I'd gladly succumb - I'm not brave,
and it's easy to believe what the preacher says
except for the conflict raging between my head
and my brain.
I don't want to die, but just the same,
some day....

Waiting for a moment
that I know will come
when I'll have to run
and find another sermon.
Everyman and Norman

and the talking priest--
still, I am at least holding all the doors open.
Inside me all outside is shared.

As the cracked bells peal it all seems unreal
but the seventh seal stays unbroken
and the Offertory plate tenders no escape -
still I refuse to scrape up a token
of esteem for these false
alleyways of the course;
I must try to divorce sense from sensing.
Tell me again,
tell me the way to go.

So when I talk to myself
although I take good care to listen
my heart grows ever more faint,
there's something missing?