

# Poems by Brian Keeble

## Far from the Dawn

*'No time cometh upon you but is followed by a worse.'*

As light's excess I am original night,  
Begotten dark of light's unyielding ground.  
My dark, discharged as light, discovers its  
Denial falls only as shadows cast by itself.  
I move to embrace and marry each borrowed shade,  
Since true descent from light to shadow finds  
All dark dissolves in bright felicity.  
My light, reflected, sanctions each weighted step  
Of transience, its sole enabling path,  
Since light and dark sculpt every seeming here.  
What animates the flower's consummate art  
Cannot not make the symmetry of leaves—  
Rose and thorn being pledged to a single stem.  
Here thought is natal to what cannot be thought:  
The mind's eye looks from the unobservable.  
All opposites, wedded ever apart, as sound  
From silence, assign the way familiarly trod.

As time, my unceasing flow—destiny's trace—  
Is like a river as it floods with life;  
It carries a tide of purgatorial fire  
Whose bloated rancour pours into the soul,  
Distorting each path of light, and so deceives  
The senses to make the seeming rigid earth  
And stars conceal the river's inviolate source  
That starts and ends in preternatural dark.

As judge, I rake the purgatorial fire's  
Abundant ash. Man's creaturehood miscarries.  
Submerged in time, fathomed only by count,  
The self-devouring here, with sweated hands,  
Consume, consume, striving against the check  
Of surfeit. The world used up in noise and stench  
Could never satisfy this gross expansion  
Of appetites. To what avail this rush  
To make addition to perfunctory discontent?  
On this bleak shore, long after the dawn,  
Finding its limit, the exhausted wave,  
Faltering, dives and breaks. The living stream  
Leaves only dregs, and dries.

Yet, what of my signs?  
There is an alchemy at work in things:  
That holy fire whose transmutation stirs  
The virgin womb of mercy, kindling there  
A radiance that lights art's equipoise,  
To show how each thing named is in the throes  
Of praise, speaking through eternity's Word.  
Thus my unseeable dark, refracted and  
Reflected in every colour, as a body  
Wears an embroidered cloak, unfolds  
To hide how naked is my original night.

## 'Without Contraries is no progression'

The ancient wisdom understood  
Our suffering; its ordered part  
In that infinity where all  
Must be accounted for; where dark  
Must have its shaping place to prove  
A foil for light, the two being one:  
How in our affliction's depth there grows  
Our sense of being apart, and how  
In seeming so we fathom at last  
The will that forms our substance here:  
As when the fateful words were said,  
'If thou be willing... nevertheless,  
Not my will but thine be done.'