

## Peter Hammill "Faint-heart And The Sermon"

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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 format  
ion team  
my understanding seems  
hiidebound 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  
f  
ades 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 deliv  
ered 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 evergies, and find a cause to pray  
so 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 that 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 e  
steem 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?

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