



Morgan

When I hear the church clock strike
I know at that moment
Morgan, somewhere in torment,
has just begun to inhale.

For this is Morgan's parish.
St Mary's sounds the quarters
around Morgan's soul.

Time hangs heavy on him.
It forces flesh on him.
Beneath the haggard white line
of that anchorite cheek-bone
four old clocks
on blackened lengths of string
ride him everywhere he travels.
Should one get stolen, or just plain stop,
he reasons, three ought to do
to fly him like a wounded Jumbo
home for a crash landing.

Home is all *oeuvre*, a live sculpture
formed from within.
For years the parish has supplied him
with his materials
and as the supply
has continued unchecked,
so Morgan's room to breathe
has slowly diminished. Meticulous
and fragile collections of litter
now fill each room like library shelves.

Only his narrow bed
remains clear for him.
In the dense darkness
radios hang like bats from the ceiling
each tuned to a different world station
each turned full on.
All night and from all quarters
the world engages him.
Babel-Lord
Morgan gathers round his bed
whatever is waste
whatever discord.

The sweetness in his smile
is incomprehensible.
But that melodious voice,
those fastidious
semantic games we engage in,
do sometimes seem to carry pleasure.
The bruised eyes sparkle,
harbouring gaiety.
We make much of him.
We sit with him,
tolerating the smell,
the innumerable tatters,
the festooning plastic bags,
those brutal clocks.
Perhaps after all it is permissible
to clear pain away
from an instant or two of each day
here in Morgan's parish.

Rogan Wolf

Morgan attended a community centre for people with long term mental health problems. His name has been changed.

Poems for... Self at Sea

<https://poemsforthewall.org>


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