

Bob Hughes



Bob Hughes writes, 'After a happy childhood in the Black Country, at fifteen whilst an engineering apprentice, I discovered the outdoors and for ten years my time and money were consumed by mountaineering. I then married but city life was not for us so we moved to Cornwall. Suddenly, I find myself retired with a loving wife, two daughters, five granddaughters and a dog. I feel my life is blessed and I would not change a thing.'

IN SEARCH OF A PRAYER

Today 's tide of pilgrims long since ebbed,
It's late in the day,
Descending darkness a friendly warm cloak
Enveloping me as I try to pray.

All the shuffling feet of old men gone,
The children and their pitter-patter,
Squeaky pushchairs and the chatter,
Echo in the mind, the sounds have died away.

No culinary promise wafting from the kitchen,
No more chink, chink of coins in the offertory box,
Dulcet tones of organ frozen,
Candles flicker on bed of sand and stutter out.

As the last disciple departed, the great door closed
With the final velvet thud of the day,
Shutting out that brief noise from the square,
Squeezing it between open and closed.

The wick of twilight is burning down,
Imperceptibly slow - slow - slow,
As the solar stage-hand steadily winds
The ever-spiralling star-spangled void.

Soft rainbow hues goldened
By the last dimming of daylight,
Seep as mist from the great windows,
To the vacant rows of silent pews.

Columns once towering monoliths,
Massive and warm in their noon ochre glow.
Now grey, black, sharper, bolder, stronger,
To bear the heavy weight of night.

No need now to search for a prayer,
The very prayer is here,
A prayer that penetrates,
From the cross via darkness inwards to the soul.

Bob Hughes

FROM PRAYER TO CONVERSATION

I did, it seems forever as a child,
Repeat by rote, words without much meaning.
Each Sunday without fail into the Church we filed,
And kneeling's hard on little legs when on a pew you're leaning.

Then to make the numbers up to the choir I was roped in,
Though I seldom knew the words and never sang in key.
Chanting Latin, ringing bells it must have been a din,
And those ancient words meant nothing much to me.

In my teen years I prayed through tears,
At what, I will never understand.
And later on when needing help, or to control my fears,
I'd send a little message to him who has always held my hand.

Then I abandoned that faithful, and true friend, yes I just walked away,
And for "the good times" in vein I searched around.
Seldom did I think of him, and rarely did I pray,
But when I turned the corner my old friend there I found.

Then I married and in hard times would often bend the knee,
To ask for help and guidance when I knew not where to turn,
And though the answer did not always seem to fit my plea,
Somehow I seemed to find my way and did oft a lesson learn.

Then when the children came along - you're blessed they all did say,
Both are girls and have such pretty faces.
Then I really learned to worry and to sincerely pray,
Especially when they cut the bonds and ventured free of traces.

To him, now that my glass of sand is running low, I turn,
As to a good, long standing and much-loved dear old friend,
Who understands me better than I myself do know,
And my prayers now conversations, I know will never end.

Bob Hughes

THE FIRST ASH WEDNESDAY

Did he who the word to us has brought,
When to the wilderness strode out,
Turn his back on his kith and kin,
Who would "CRUCIFY HIM" shout?

Did he despair of ever seeing us
Take to our hearts those Commands Ten?
We who would him to a rood cross nail,
And turn our backs on God's Amen.

Did he not return to us from the desert bare,
And we handed him both thorns and scourge,
Offer himself for us in sacrifice,
To right our wrongs and our sins purge?

Did we on brow that ashen mark as symbol take,
To recognise he paid our toll?
His church now cloaked in purple robes,
Offers peace to us in mind and soul.

Bob Hughes

WHERE A FEW ARE GATHERED TOGETHER

There are old churches, cold churches,
And those without people.
There's Tudor and Gothic,
Some with both bells and a steeple.

There are those that are crammed
To the doors on a Sunday.
And those that are closed
Except Bank Holiday Monday.

Methodist chapels converted to pubs,
Wesley must spin in his grave.
Convents now university hubs,
Are there no souls left here to save?

Yes there are still great Cathedrals no doubt,
With an organ, and a choir in the stalls.
There are many in ruins that Henry knocked down,
And the stones used in building both hovels and halls.

But the Church is the people,
Yes just common folk-lay,
Who hale from the land and the town,
And gather together to pray.

No building is needed, just the will,
To offer a prayer, song or thought.
For He is there with you and your heart will fill,
With a treasure that cannot be bought.

Bob Hughes

A DREAM FOR A DAY

I dreamed a dream, that just for one day,
All tools of war were put away,
All thoughts of anger left aside,
All fear we had did not reside.

The dream did in its intensity grow,
My thoughts beyond that dream did go,
Of a day, JUST ONE of no theft or crime,
Of not one person living life in grime.

Can you imagine how that day would feel?
Don't lock your door for thieves won't steal,
All prices given will be fair,
All wages paid reflect true tare.

If your eye can see as mine has gleaned,
A day where you are neighbour's friend, not fiend.
And ladies - they were offered seats,
And children - given thought, not treats.

Perhaps each man to his Church would go,
Though even for just a minute or so.
And ask of GOD, if he could see his way,
To let us have Peace, for just one day.

Bob Hughes