

The Shell/ Endings

June 2023

Shell

In my garden are many Clematis
And some have their roots in a pot
They all give me great pleasure
But one beyond measure
Holds an item which means such a lot

Clematis roots need to be shaded
If beautiful blooms you intend
I've used pebble and stone
But in this one alone
I've a shell I received from a friend

Many years have passed since our first meeting
And at first I thought her somewhat cold
She was better for knowing
And a friendship was growing
I found out she'd a heart of gold

We would visit on Saturday mornings
We'd always have cream cakes and tea
Whilst the lads talked MG
Joan and I you would see
In her garden beside the fig tree

Her house had a large cottage garden
Full of flowers and foliage and shrubs
She loved plants, not cut flowers
We'd sit and talk for hours
About life and the MG Car Club

Several years have elapsed since Joan left us
But her memory stays clear as a bell
As my garden I'm tending
There's a friendship unending
Wrapped up in the gift of a shell.

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The Shell

I saw it first beneath the waves
Around the shores of Meganissi
Whilst snorkelling – a different world
Caves with flowing grass and weed so pretty.

Exotic fish – orange, yellow, electric blue
And some of them with rainbow hue.
Diving deeper, nestling on the sandy floor
Was a shell so large two hands were needed
To carry it to the sandy shore.

Pale amber in colour, black lines across
More beautiful than any other around,
Inside an opalescent shade of pearl
A home for hermit crabs within its whorls.

When I came home from my favourite place
An expert confirmed it was not native to Greece
Most likely, he thought, the Carribean
Indeed a conundrum – a difficult case.

How it had got there I'll never know
But I was lucky to see it, and so
I'm happy that it's mine to share
Its rarity and beauty with those who care.

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Ode To My Shell Suit

Early eighties street wear – uber bright,
Based on 60s sporting clothes,
I loved my shell suit – pink and white –
Every other neon colour others chose.

The Bulbone 2-piece from Liverpool
Became a fixture on the street
And on the dance floor the fashion rule.
We attempted the new trend to meet.

David Icke was the one to follow,
Ex-sportsman, then television star,
In bright turquoise he did wallow
And said, with Christ he was on par!

Not long lived this bright new style,
In '86 along came punk.
But the shell suit had lasted a while
Before the neon fashion was sunk.

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The Shell

I can no more endure these lonely, endless days.
Melancholia swims lazily around this hermetic construct,
This shell that surrounds and calcifies my thoughts
And i have become cultured and untrue.
I grew into its refined, sacred space
When all about me was ill-natured and unholy.
But now its pearlescent walls bear down on me.
I am dulled with existence
And emptiness fills every vacant moment.

And yet, it is said that Joy is found in the Now,
And if that's the case then the key
Eludes and avoids and remains but a dream
And stories for others to tell - not me, never me.

Now, if i could stop the clock so i'll not be missed,
And leave Evermore frozen in its tracks,
I'd sidestep the moment and give time the slip,
To search for a better way;
To find pursuits and enlightenments
To put meaning to my day.
If i could pick at Eternity's fabric and find me the seam,
And dart through the gap with a silky wave
Of an ethereal hand to pause the senseless and move
To a place of conjuring and that feeling i crave
That nothing is left undone;
For diversion from that nagging sense
That there is always more to do.

Now, would you believe? - in an instant,
I was moved (by my longing) to a place
From where i can see my own face,
And all those others, too.
There they are, frozen, all mouths wide;
Like dead poets pointing from the far side:
"We went that way too, there's really nothing - so sorry."
And there is my hand, and my face, and my eyes,
All hollowed, distilled, and halted.
How sorry i look, worn down by lies
And promises of something much more.

So what will i find? What is there to find?
Something better, finer, maybe worse?
Like the Buddha will i find it is all in the mind?
Am i damned if i do, like some others who
Seek their pleasure in the flesh?
Whether in meat or sucking on bone;
Or dancing, whirling, or flying to Marakesh -
What's in it for me, this vague constancy,
That drives me out of matter?
Will i alight on a jetstream from a high mountain top,
Or is my promised land to be flatter?
This all seems so plain, it's painful again,

It's bland, incidental, not me.
I can tell from my face it's all too much strain
To sit here and pretend day after day.

Now my soul's comes to life.
The shackles of time have dropped off
And the Shell is cast away.
Hermes' angel has brought me freedom's knife
And the cord that bound me has gone.

Away through the clouds and still oceans -
I spin and i fly and dive,
And find I can perform all these strange motions.
I'm breathing in colour and thoughts are harmonic,
The scales are lifting from my eyes.
The medium of movement, it seems, is love.

Propelled by my sighs,
I come to rest on a singular point.

All about me is everything i know,
Below and above and around.
From here i'm not sure where i should go,
So i witness my life over again and again, every ridiculous moment.
Conversations i had with my mum as a child,
Searching for the source of this torment.

But no bright light shone on me there,
Eternity, it seems, is infinitely dull
So i return, back to the very shell.... and i draw its wall around me

The pendulum swings and i draw again through these tubes and the like.
The vagueness returns - i feel ill..
And other things too;
There's love in an instant as how one choking seizes air,
I'm filled with relief and something like awe.
I'm breathing, sitting here, alone once again,
But clearly seeing so much more.

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The Shell

I built a shield around me from school days until adulthood
 A means to shut out any heartache, nastiness and pain.
 I'd break out occasionally when confidence had grown
 But always ready to retreat if I was unhappy or worried once again.

My personal safety barrier helped through many a difficult time
 But sadly it also meant I was never truly, honestly me.
 My shell was my shield & without it I felt lost, vulnerable;
 I'd hide behind that shell being what others wanted me to be.

I became so used to hiding behind my fragile wall
 And I didn't know how to break out, to be honest, to be free.
 It seemed too difficult to show my real self to the world,
 I wasn't sure I was someone they'd really want to see.

But growing older has given me courage, the desire to reveal
 The true person that I am, not the shell hidden behind her shell.
 Could I just face the world as I really was, not hide away any more,
 There was only one way to find out, only one way to tell.

I now face the world in my entirety, let them see this is who I am.
 No more hiding behind that facade, the whole me is now on show.
 So I've broken that shell that protected me, was my faithful friend,
 And now I'm living life properly, so let's see how this person can grow.

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Word Associations

"Box without hinges, key or lid
 Yet inside golden treasure is hid."
 Egg shell
 Shell I continue, if I am egged on
 To stretch this yolk
 The distant beach with cockle shells, winkles and whelks,
 Shells of every variety, will come to mind,
 The noble conche, lifted to the ear to hear
 The roaring wind or stormy sea;
 A crashing artillery shell, scattering the ocean's treasure far and wide.
 Bomb shell, of the metaphorical sort,
 Covering many of life's ups and downs.
 Egg shell paint, a thin layer to cover those blemishes left behind.
 A shell company, wherein great illegal treasure may be hid,
 But emptied in the blink of an eye
 When, by some electric order, a transfer, bid

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The Shell

In the ocean's depths, a story unfolds, of creatures adorned in shimmering golds.
A wondrous world, where secrets dwell,
Within the graceful embrace of a shell.

A mollusk's masterpiece, a home so fine,
A sanctuary where wonders align.
Whispering echoes of the ancient sea, within its curves, a hidden mystery.

Oh, shell, you bear the tales of old, stories of seafarers, brave and bold.
A vessel of beauty, crafted with care, a testament to nature's artful flair.

From spiral whorls to spiraling heights, a spiral staircase to celestial delights.
In every chamber, a new surprise, a testament to life's grand enterprise.

But beyond the shores, a different scene, a word takes on a meaning unforeseen.
In the realm of commerce, it finds its place,
A corporate entity with its own embrace.

A shell, a symbol of elusive guise, an offshore haven that some monetize.
A legal labyrinth, where funds may hide, a shadowed realm where truth may subside.

Yet amidst the shadows, light may still gleam, for transparency and justice are not a dream.
Revealing the secrets, breaking the spell, unveiling the truths that within you dwell.

Oh, shell, you bear the weight of power, a double-edged sword, an uncertain hour.
From seafloor depths to financial might, in your embrace, both darkness and light.

So let us remember, as we behold,
The stories told in nature's precious mold.
And may we strive for a world more fair, where shells of truth and beauty we share.

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Loose Endings

When you come to consider some endings
 You'll find out there are different kinds
 Some are happy or sad
 Some are good, some are bad
 Or unreal, which play with our minds

Perhaps you are doing some mending
 Or sending a pal a long letter
 Paying bills that are pending
 Or a hill you're ascending
 Well descending would surely be better

Sometimes there's a play we're attending
 It has a most confusing ending
 Our thoughts we are lending
 Whilst homewards we are wending
 On how badly the end needs amending

The poor author may just need defending
 Support to his efforts we're tending
 His works he is vending
 But we are contending
 Then ending needs bending and blending

If you think that this poem's unending
 Well, I've come to the end of the line
 I hope I'm not offending
 With this saga I'm rending
 I'm suspending these efforts of mine

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When We Are Apart

When we are apart
 Silence enshrouds me
 I speak and other people
 Hear me but
 That's another world.
 I breathe and I awake
 After sleeping but
 It's all an illusion –
 Only my dreams are real
 When we are apart.

And now you've gone
 For ever my love.
 Soul has flown and
 Life is suspended.
 My world is a silent one
 Now we are apart.

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Ending - (England v Australia 2019)

One of the greatest endings seen.
Cricket - England versus Australia
Third Test - Headingley 2019
Ben Stokes, Jack Leach, heroes of the play

The Aussies, with one wicket to get,
Thought the game was surely theirs
But Jack Leach, No. 11 in specs
And partner Ben had other ideas!

Stokes peppered the boundary fence
With fours and sixes around the ground
Whilst Leach, at the other end, was tense
But dogged resistance he found.

Ben's every boundary was cheered
By adoring crowds in the stands.
Every dot ball from Jack was cheered
And the Aussies' fury was fanned.

When Jack got a single, the crowds went wild -
You'd have thought he'd got a ton,
Whilst from Ben the runs still piled
And English hopes rose like the sun.

And, suddenly, it was all over - WE'D WON
THE ASHES were coming home once more!
Stokes - 135: Jack Leach - his precious 1!
Their incredible partnership, the winning score.

The most exciting ending
To an Ashes match ever seen
But is there more pending
This year - better than there's ever been?

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The Ending

What is the ending?
Is it the feeling you have towards life?
How would everything end?
Would it end with happiness, sadness or regrets?
If you have a chance would you chose the ending
the way you want or is it out off your hands!?

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Endings

Exams stretching ahead with no visible ending
 It had been a week with another to go.
 Would it be worth it, who's to know?
 Until results were posted, then it would show.

The bell rang for the final sentence
 Pens were put down, papers collected,
 A crowd had gathered around the entrance,
 Comparing answers to some questions selected.

'Oh God, I misunderstood', said one
 'Don't go by me, I'm not sure I was right.
 Let's got to the pub, keep out of sight,
 And think about the future to come.'

The ending is really a beginning
 To the rest of their lives and whatever
 It brings them.

Until they reach the inevitable ending
 As we all must. But is it an ending?
 Nobody knows
 But upon which note this must be closed.

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The Ending

I tried to write a book – a novel and a best-seller I thought
 But for all my time & effort it eventually came to naught.
 I'd tried to plan the story, knew I needed beginning, middle & end
 And when my masterpiece was finished, to a publisher I would send.

I thought of a catchy title, one that would stand out from all the rest,
 My novel was going to be original, brilliant & definitely the best.
 I drafted details of all the characters that readers would surely adore
 And then they'd all be waiting for me to write some more.

I had visions of TV appearances, book-signings & perhaps a film as well
 But I hadn't realised that my jotted down ramblings wouldn't gel.
 My vision laid untouched for years, abandoned to another room
 Then retrieved through lockdown after a chat with a friend on Zoom.

Is this the chance to finish my book, finally make my mark?
 I'd be sitting at my desk trying my best with this writing lark.
 I actually finished one chapter, was feeling just a little bit smug
 As I drank yet another strong coffee from my very favourite mug.

However, it was all so futile as the beginning was as far as I could get,
 And about the middle and the elusive ending I would constantly fret.
 So a novelist is no longer on my agenda, perhaps a poet is what I should be,
 Although I'll probably still struggle with an ending – I guess that that's just me!

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