

No Greater Love

Meet me where the waters lap,
Meet me where the lilies lure
The sun into a water-trap
That emperors and words obscure.
Oh, let the Princess be a toad
Or that I'd ceased within the womb,
For fear she lure me from the road
Into the monster's sightless room.
And meet me with a sickle-blade
Lest fire and water make
What can't with sickles be unmade
And swells beneath the lake.

And meet me where the fowls conspire
In nooks beneath St Stephen's Tower
To plunder nests the cuckoos hire
To birds who have the itch for power
And leave their eggs across the globe
To hatch as nest eggs in due time;
For they were never xenophobe
And exploitation was no crime.
And meet me with a telescope,
To watch the egg shells break:
We'll document the death of hope
As feathers hit the lake.

Or meet me in the shopping mall
Where toads condemned to play princesses
Finger weaves Made in Nepal
And slip on Afghan cotton dresses
Made by fingers ten years old
That strum on silent harps of thread

© Khoisan Fisher

An elegy for children sold
To fill a shrill princess's head
A world away from thumbs that bleed,
Where bullied bodies ache,
And men with contracts take no heed
Of throbs beneath the lake.

Or meet me on the battlefields
Where angels ply their sacred trade
And children with their swords and shields
Fight monsters men of words have made
While men in suits count out the bucks
And men at home roll out the steel
And lily leaves festoon the trucks
Whose wounded sun nor earth can heal.
Then meet me with a pick and spade
And shovel through the slake
For clues to why they were afraid
Of ripples on the lake.

Or meet me in the institute
And in the university,
And watch biologists compute
The codes of life's diversity
And break its back beneath the book
And trim the wayward monster's claws
And nest it in its labelled nook
Ordained by formulæ and laws,
And patent this and trademark that,
While lawyers on the make
Slap orders on the habitat
Of lives beneath the lake.

Or meet me in the house of books
Where all that's knowable is known
Since learned men in hock to crooks

© Khoisan Fisher

Have long assured that toads will own
A Princess This, a Pharaoh That,
Their sacred scripts from temples far,
A Piccadilly piece of tat,
A Saartjie pickled in a jar.
And meet me with a crucifix,
With bible and with stake,
And, with purloined exhibit, fix
The dark heart of the lake.

Or meet me in the white-domed church
Whose urbane popes have primed their priests
To preach how pious knights must lurch
At whores who ride on numbered beasts
And slay the godless brutes by turn
Till all unto His Will submit.
And horn will blare and bush will burn
As Abaddon breaks from the pit.
Then meet me with your Tarot cards
Explaining how to fake
The Falling Towers whose searing shards
Raise hell beneath the lake.

So meet me now beneath the tree
That shades the sun and moons the air,
Where sky is cold and green as sea
And earth is dark and damp and bare.
And when we mutually eclipse
And each to each through each has flowed
Kiss not lest I should find your lips
Are cold and green as of a toad.
But meet me with a lily's face
And let the sun mistake
Toad for Princess, and toad embrace
The monster in the lake.