

Homage to Elizabeth Jennings

by Con Chapman

I'm sure had we met I would have overlooked you as plain, ordinary;
yet reading you now, twelve years after you died, is a bit like the
light
you wrote about in *Delay*, which left the star years ago,
and glowed on a face below after it was spent.



You wrote of the road up Calvary, and how idle onlookers
may have joined in the scorn heaped upon the Savior for a thrill.
Isn't that the way it works; two or three with a stake in the matter,
the rest indifferent until caught up in the madness of others.

Barred from hotel bars and restaurants because you drank too
much,
and perhaps because of a failure to attend to your person and dress,
you won the prizes but seemed to disdain the people who gave them,
mere merchants of art who saw the light but felt not the fire.



They put you away in the mental home, where you could see
yourself
as if from afar, still vibrating like an electric coil. In youth you'd
gone to
the circus, but now remembered only the bus ride there,
your mind making a better show than the one before your eyes.

