

# Where I Sit Here Clad in Armour by the Stars

*by* Iain James Robb

Where I sit here clad in armour by the stars,  
I do not think of you; those thoughts are over.  
Beneath the silver here is light enough,  
To make me ponder by a lighter way.  
Beyond the bronze of our sun and the others  
That haply rein the course of other moons,  
In spiralled loops of other galaxies-  
I deem that there is always life enough  
To guide me, pondering, by another road.

As I leave the path of day the scattered remnants  
Of the life left in ascension of the dusk  
Lies still with me; there are no pasts, just 'present':  
No 'future' is, but in this present place,  
Spooled out distracted in the straits of ways  
To live each second out. This will not matter  
When I must pass, and past the uncaged hours  
That Time rings out unending, in the place  
Where love along with loss is lost uncaptured:  
No dove or raven fit for symbol there.  
It is not death, though, simply not life's essence  
As we know it here, while here I do not die-  
When I look up to catch the stars in stasis,  
Which I do not think are arbiters of Fate:  
Since, scattered far across, perhaps, by chance  
To rain their influence through some secret burden  
They are forged themselves of the same hidden purpose,  
And expand and dance, by Will that moved them there.

This is not the reason why I choose to view them,  
As they pass and glance, reborn to light my wavelengths:  
Tuning me to reach past flesh and feeling,  
As I reach through all the nobleness of night:  
But just some strange desire to face my death soon,  
By cancelling my thought with my sensation  
By the meditative spheres, though this is action  
And also is not dying. I had died young  
When I in erstwhile paths, my sweet, could follow  
The footsteps you've tracked past in all your glamour,  
Not knowing that too could pass and now, alive,  
I can choose without my choice to look alone here-  
At the bridled footsteps of the heavy moon.

There are other cosmic entities past counting  
In the grasp of no high god's transparent hands-  
Beyond our wheels of fervour and redemption,  
That fold back into this disk-shaped universe:  
A convex disk pressed inwards *in aeternum*,  
By the abstract bounding curve of Time and Space-  
The first and final thought without thought's borders,  
With no margins to its figure-eight shaped frames-  
Where the nucleus of each one in refolding  
Leads towards unfolding births of other realms.  
And it is not quite loneliness to be alone there,  
If I've left all, this night, to learn my self as shade,  
When all that's left is only this strange spectre  
Of the soul that only is, that wills to leave:  
That does not turn to you this night and yearn here,  
For the seconds this takes cost too many hours;  
I am guided in my sails to some new harbour:  
I am guided forth to walk another way.

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There Space and Time will never be divided:  
Here time has space that will divide us, now.  
A ray up there rests still where it's resided:  
We fly apart: you gaze from your own prow,  
Upon the wordless ocean's higher crescents.  
I fail to find you there: I know not how,  
And so I seek those realms of nether Essence-  
And find my fruit upon an uncaught bough.

I have no fear, from faiths slain by strange furies,  
That used to tear my sleepless mind and soul-  
Till slumber seemed with all celestial juries  
To indict my savaged heart, to eat it whole.  
Fate's emptied as my thoughts are now, of substance  
That were fit to rend Dream's heart, though I believe  
In nothing now but wintering of my indolence:  
By which my griefs grow pale and fail to grieve.

And so I leave all hope for those whose moments  
Are not brightest ere the morn breaks down the dark-  
But who run through nigher life like crowds of cormorants  
That see all ships cross paths and disembark:  
Though we whose lives are shut before our slumber  
Would set our ships unsailed, beyond the west,  
Where no star dreams of worlds of hails or thunder:  
Where no ships break, in harbours of our rest.

Be with me now, sun, stars and moons and planets;  
I chart my course of sight where thought can see,  
Though eyes fall short, sight sighs and plots its orbits  
Beyond what falls, and charts each galaxy-  
In tandem with the Primal Plan whose vision  
Was not seen or thought before but breathes its path  
Eternally, past blind worlds sans intermission,

In creation's eyes, past wheels of loves and wrath.

*Somewhere deep above me is a sea-stray striding  
Far over the cloudscapes of the midnight air;  
Could it ever be you, what is the path you're riding?  
And I fail to find you, yet I fail to care.  
Yes, and can it be you? I feel your own soul shining:  
For my own has left me, though I know not where;  
And over these slide-lengths I can see you sliding,  
Way over the moon's rest, where the sunsets steer.*

On desert strands, on some strange still savannah,  
Bring down your beams and let their light cascade  
On cities hid from storms now, my Diana,  
Towns left to gales that say their things must fade  
By granite paths where man's ambition falters;  
Under iron panoramas, where the shade  
Holds faces lost to temples' desert altars,  
We will turn with them; our dying cavalcade

Has left, for just the storm-path's outer reaches;  
Shine your still ship, on towns that held decrees  
For your sake once, their virgin, by the beaches  
That forsake your name. From forth Elysian seas  
Of blackness cast your crown down and be with us  
Thru the months of summer birds, their brides the bees:  
Thru the months of other moons whose pale coronas  
Cross through what vaults, across what galaxies?

You lead me now, though now the route I move through  
Sits as stilled as stagnant pools that rock no bloom;  
Be still, I'll claim you though no man can prove you  
As a guidance sought to stay the dice of doom.  
There are more just like you, though your opal awnings  
Ride mine this night, with all your star-bands high,

Yours since white childhood, since you were my own then,  
Your flesh perennial, though a shade stand I.

Tilt silver on some bough that left no fragrance  
In eons that sleep, where no minds commandeer  
Dreams' flights, to bring them back their radiance  
With scribes, that lit some Doric hemisphere;  
Tilt down your knights whose white reflecting glory  
Casts darkness on the nights that beat their breath  
On boys, who dream, to tell an ancient story,  
Of times whose lasting splendour is their death:

*No straying paths in terms of Time unbroken,  
And what is past is present though it's born to die.  
Is there more to sight; our life is just a token  
To the Primal Dance that makes these moments fly.  
Is there more to know? All of my hopes bier-broken,  
And the life below the stars an untaught lie:  
And all I dream is of dead dreams yet woken,  
As clouds reborn through some expanseless sky.*

Ours is one of myriad lands that pass to fable;  
Whatever texts men know that outlive stone  
Won't outlive our earth: by some new tower of Babel  
Cast your head to rest, slight kings, and pass your throne  
To stars; God's heirs? No, deputies of metal-  
One thing the death-born phoenix won't disdain  
To reach towards, if earths peel, bough to petal:  
Though all worlds are shade, beside the rippling rain.

All I've longed for gone, I'll watch instead the rainfall;  
They are egoless, those dying diamond beads.  
I would be with them, if just to hear the gale call,  
And know that storm through sense with sense recedes:  
For I feel it still, though this is no real wonder,

That though pains before sought pity by my verse,  
I would lose my self by Jove's red heavy thunder-  
Just to ride his weight, across this universe.

Great sphere that holds us here, deflecting comets  
As though God held you to be His second sun,  
Has your whirlpool eye forgotten all the orbits  
That outlive all genius' eons: are you that one  
That with mindless breath, with blindest stars eternal  
In the sense we see their light where dead stars lie,  
Shall outlast each fractured thought that comes diurnal  
To my scattered eyes? I deem that I could die

And not know any thing of what surrounds you;  
Yet I know, though Einstein vainly sought to know,  
Why other depthless realms still lie beyond you;  
I feel them thrive and fly, with every moment's throe.  
All of matter scattered when a vacuum rises,  
To estrange form's seed, though naught of matter die,  
Is drawn out elsewhere still, through primal crises  
That expand each void, through each expanding sky.

*I have seen it all; I have no joy or grieving-  
I have grieved for others, though this grief no more  
Can move to you, my sweet: I watch you falling  
Like a distant fire that lights a shrapnelled shore.  
And I know You now, my moon, I hear you calling  
Though You stand mute always in your moment's lore:  
Though You strive at fire at last before the dawning,  
Though I follow You, and watched You fall before.*

I mourn for nothing's sake; I am departed  
Past emotion's bounds now, I am gone away  
To virginal sharp stars no wind has parted,  
Not to grieve for night or dying light of day.

There are worlds on worlds here, and in their spirals  
There are realms on realms, and we might see them all  
Had we more than dust to outlive rocks and corals-  
Through repeated lives to roost, and rise to fall.

Know nothing new can last - hence rise from mourning-  
Know no thing on this light and dark world's floor  
Can make your sorrow heavier than the morning,  
In this pale-bright place past rocks you crossed before.  
Across the scattered ash that marks the morning  
There will come new birth pangs at the rise of dusk:  
Of travails passed, to pass again, with yearning  
That with death of sense becomes a tarnished husk.

With all envisioned things there is farewell now;  
There's a blankness that my eyes can't go beyond,  
Where lives all light, through folding, as a rainbow  
Meets its mark and rises where its bow's points bend;  
And now I know, though I had always known so,  
In my store of thorns and hair of past men's garbs,  
That those living by a wind by its thrust should follow:  
Though predestined by a court of jesting orbs.

And now I know that, as a leaf may scatter,  
As two points may meet in one I'll meet them there-  
The shattered stars that mimic knight and jester-  
That crown all kings and queens whose name is air;  
And love and wrath alike are born and perish  
With the frenzied aches that make one day's refrain:  
And the peace beyond as pools no brooks replenish  
But are outward spread, with ripples of the rain.

*I could die this night and could go on without you,  
All you orbs and suns, and would be no more dead  
Than you have ever been, though still surrounds you*

*All the births you've blown, from storm's maidenhead.  
I feel it is you, my moon, that turns me near you;  
And I know it is you, I feel no hopes or dread,  
To drift alone with stillness where the dark unwinds you,  
To shed again your image where the dark is shed.*

*For I feel it is you, that yet must pass me onward:  
And I know that it's you; by tides there keeps one frond  
Of weed that passes by when night runs forward:  
And I sail above you, since I go beyond.*

*EDIT (by SDR) -*

Clad in armour by the stars  
You sit, and I do not think of you,  
those thoughts are over. Below the silver,  
light is enough, in spiralled loops  
of other galaxies, always life enough.  
Ascension of the dusk  
lies still with me, no past, just "present".  
I look up, catch the stars in stasis,  
they are not arbiters of fate, scattered  
far across by chance, raining  
influence through secret burdens,  
forged of themselves  
the same hidden purpose, reborn  
to light my wavelengths; tuning me  
to reach past flesh and feeling. There are other  
cosmic entities past counting, in the grasp  
of no high god's transparent hands- beyond  
wheels of fervour and redemption,  
that fold back into this disk-shaped universe:  
A convex disk pressed inwards in aeternum,  
By abstract bounding curve  
of Time and Space- The first and final thought



without thought's borders, with no margins  
to its figure-eight shaped frames- where  
the nucleus of each one in refolding, leads  
towards unfolding births, other realms.  
And it is not quite loneliness to be alone there,  
there Space and Time will never be divided:  
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No fear, from faiths slain by strange furies,  
that tear by tear the sleepless mind and soul-  
till slumber seemed with all celestial juries  
to indict the heart, to eat it whole.

Be with me, sun and stars  
and moons and planets; I chart my course,  
though eyes fall short, sight sighs  
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bring down your beams, let their light cascade  
on cities hid from storms, my Diana.  
The Primal Dance that makes these moments fly  
The life below the stars an untaught lie.

