

Martin Robertson

Bury My Heart

Bury my heart. . . But the heart's not one.
Hearts bud off from it, plant themselves
in loved places.

Two such buds swelled,
Dropped from my child-heart, grow
there where they were buried long ago:
one from the garden at Jesmond Hill
(not, as it sounds, in Newcastle
but above Pangbourne on the middle Thames)
dreams across the valley to Sulham woods;
the second at Saunton—wind-washed pink thrift
in short grass on low sandstone cliffs,
long low black rocks enclosing
clear pools and foaming
firths of tide, fencing
the cowrie beach—
looks out to Lundy or along the long sands which reach
with their spread of softer-sanded, spear-grassed dunes
miles away to the rivers of Barnstaple.

Later one lodged at Perachora, from the sanctuary
below the lighthouse on the rocky promontory
looks over blue gulf-water to the blue
mountains of Achaea, and through
the eye of the Corinth canal. Another grows
in the far corner of Weymouth Bay, at Ringstead,
looks out to Portland or up to Whitenoth's
high chalk head.

A fifth in Ithaca, from the end
of the long landlocked harbour with its island,
enjoys the shining broom-slopes. Another at Iken looks
from a low cliff, like Saunton's but topped with oaks,
out over grey shining water, grey
shining mud of an East-coast estuary.

The last, dropped more lately, took deep root
at Sheepstead, quiet country of water and wood
between the wandering Thames and the White Horse.

A bigger heart that, I think, than any
of the rest. Bury my heart at Sheepstead, then.