



ROBERT HOLDSTOCK

1948-2009

He regrets that his dreams are not fulfilled, yet dreams

And in the stars, in the silence of that silent world,
Sky-stretched above me as I stretch in sleep,
Earth pillowed,
The small, much dazzling gleam of eternity, the infinity
That embraces the wide-eyed wonderer,
The wanderer in the void of thought;
There, yes there! There is the moment; there the dream.

I lie on earth. Soon earth will lie on me.
Will I see through chalk, clay; through the finger's dusting
On the wood;
Through the small whisper of parting; the salt drop?

Will I see the trip I need, I wonder,
Find it among those rusting
Fire-rustling echoes of eternity?
Some so old. And some so new. New words.
New worlds of stars,
Where thoughts, like and unlike ours, perhaps begin to queue,
And radiate,
Hoping to be heard!

Night sky, wrap me round
Hold me in your fire, your future, the memory of fire.
I do not need the sound of fury to be in your embrace,
Only the transport to your echoing, soundless space.

Robert Holdstock, 2008

INTRODUCTORY

Etude in A flat Op.25 No.1 *and* Nocturne in D flat Op.27 No.1

by Frédéric Chopin

Lucy Parham (piano)

THE SERVICE

Excerpt from “The Lark Ascending”

by Ralph Vaughan Williams

Lucy Parham (piano) and Cynthia Fleming (violin)



MINISTER

THE REVEREND JAMES ROBINSON

CHRIS HOLDSTOCK

CHRISTIAN LEHMANN

ROY KETTLE

CHRIS EVANS



“Black Horse And The Cherry Tree”

K.T. Tunstall

MALCOLM EDWARDS

JIM BURNS



WENDY FROUD

CHRIS PRIEST

“Heroes”

David Bowie



LISA TUTTLE



GARRY KILWORTH

The passing of alpha

I was not there
when he walked over the hill
and the light of dusk took his shadow.
He paused for a moment
at the top of the road

the tall, broad man, the rock,
moving quietly through
the stillness;
walking down
to a place we can only imagine.

Imagination, image, magic,
root memory,
that is the old boy now.

His shade,
is one more shadow
in a woodland glade
the dreaming place:
his voice, calm memory,
the alpha purr,
a whisper of love,
and when needed,
a sharp note of direction.

At the break and set
when the light is perfect
we will see the tall man on the hill
crossing the border --

and though he faces away from us
as he must
his breath is the wind of life, and still

and still,
the Old Wolf.

Robert Holdstock, 2009

MATILDA VERRELLS

(Rob's god-daughter and niece)



JO FLETCHER

Yssobel's Last Song: The Crossing Place

The crossing place is where we meet, and where we part.

The crossing place is where we test our heart.

The crossing place is where we turn and turn:

It is the moment's pause;

The road where we make selection.

Yes, this is the Shaping Place!

Yearning comes strong here.

At the crossing place we find our next direction.

The wind from the valley was strong. Yssobel stood in her furs on the rock where, as a child, she had stood when her father had told her of the legend of her mother, Guiwenneth.

Rianna was long in her grave. The Villa was intact and fully weatherproofed. Over the long span of years, since Jack and her father had left, many travellers had passed by, and Yssobel had known affection and friendship, and some had stayed and helped to build and maintain the fragile structure that Steven had drawn and shaped from his dream.

She was old, now, and Serpent's Pass was no longer accessible, though it had revealed many of its secrets in her years of exploration.

There was no sense of loneliness in her. No longing for lost time. No passion for lost love. The valley blew through her, and its changing breezes were sustenance enough. On the wind came memory and joy. There was no sadness in her.

Today, though, something was different. There was a shadow in the distance, a small movement where the dawn sun was illuminating the edge of the river. There was brightness, shifting as the sun rose. And a small shape approaching through that gleam of light.

It suddenly seemed to see her, as she stood on the rock.

Across a great distance, an arm was raised in greeting. From where she stood, Yssobel raised both her arms, and indicated that the woman should hurry home.

From *Avilion*, 2009

MALCOLM EDWARDS

MINISTER

THE REVEREND JAMES ROBINSON

“As for me,” she repeated, “you can find me again. I am always in the wood. There are more of me than you can imagine; all I ask, my dearest love ... all I ask ... just dream me well. Dream me beautiful. And dream me happy, and with a heart that can fulfill all your own needs and love....”

From *Gate of Ivory, Gate of Horn*, 1997



“So Long, It’s Been Good to Know You”

So long, it’s been good to know you
So long, it’s been good to know you
So long, it’s been good to know you
And I’ve got to be drifting along

Woody Guthrie

**Trumpet Voluntary
by John Stanley**

**Trumpet Voluntary
by Jean Joseph Mouret**

Katy Moore (trumpet) and Edmund Connolly (organ)

Sarah would very much like you to join her and the rest of Rob's family here in the chapel for refreshments after the service.

Photo of Rob courtesy of Bill Senior

Masks by Alan Lee from *Lavondyss* by Robert Holdstock

The musicians

Piano – Lucy Parham

Lucy Parham was BBC Young Musician of the Year in 1984 and has performed with many leading orchestras, including the BBC Concert Orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. She is director of next year's Schumann 200 Festival at King's Place. Her website is www.lucyparham.com.

Violin – Cynthia Fleming

Cynthia Fleming is Leader of the BBC Concert Orchestra

Trumpet – Kate Moore

Kate Moore is Principal Trumpet of the BBC Concert Orchestra

Organ – Edmund Connolly

Edmund Connolly is Organist of Rosslyn Hill Chapel

Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel

Rosslyn Hill Chapel was founded in 1692 on its present site as a Dissenting Protestant Meeting. It became a Unitarian Chapel in the 1820s, and the present chapel was built between 1862 and 1885. If you would like to know more about it, please pick up a leaflet outlining its history and spiritual approach.

The Woodland Trust

Those who wish to can make online donations to [The Woodland Trust](http://www.dedicatetrees.com/Default.aspx) for the [Rob Holdstock Memorial Fund](http://www.dedicatetrees.com/Default.aspx). If you would prefer to post donations please send them to The Woodland Trust (Rob Holdstock Memorial Fund), c/o Leverton & Sons Ltd., 181 Haverstock Hill, London NW3 4QS. Or you can phone 020 7586 4221 for more information. The web address of the fund is: <http://www.dedicatetrees.com/Default.aspx>. (Enter HOLDSTOCK into the search box.)

MY DARLING ROBBIE

Where is he? Where are the sounds of K.T. Tunstall, the Stones, Vaughan Williams and Sibelius being played at top volume? Where are the irresistible smells of supper; the tapping on the computer keyboard late into the night; the discussions about his beloved Yssobel and *Serpent's Pass*? Where is the ready smile, the all-enveloping hug, the goodnight kiss? Where are the entreaties to dance round the room to Omnia or Queen at midnight (what did the neighbours think?); Where are the hourly 'phone calls when I'm not at home, the plans for Christmas parties with family and friends, the thoughts of impressing Ana with the new paella recipe in Spain at New Year, the walks across muddy fields kicking at mole hills in the hope of finding arrowheads and traces of the ancient past?

It seems incredible he isn't here. Just a few weeks ago, he was revelling in a family birthday in the New Forest and delighting in the magical candle-lit balloons wafting over the trees into the starry night; the Gollancz party where he was his usual rumbustious self, enthusiastically celebrating the work of new authors and enjoying the company of old friends; and dissecting with precision the latest film he had seen with the 'the boys'.

Suddenly, the silence is overwhelming.

I have been extremely privileged, and the luckiest person in the world, to have spent over 25 years with Rob. He was the kindest, most generous, loving, thoughtful, funniest – and most modest – person I have ever known. His exuberance and zest for life were infectious and I know he touched everyone he came across with that *joie de vivre* that was his hallmark.

I also feel extremely privileged to have shared my life with one of the most imaginative and gifted writers of our time. Although I'm no writer, he discussed almost every thought for stories, novels and poems with me – pure joy. The readability of all his books masked huge effort and dedication to finding just the right word or phrase, hours of research, months and years of planning. He was thrilled that Gollancz had recently re-published so many of his books – and extremely proud that most were also available in his beloved France. I hope his books will continue to give pleasure to many for years to come.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank everyone here for coming today (Rob would have been overwhelmed), to Rob's and my family for their rock-like support over the past few weeks, to the many friends, old and new, who have turned their lives upside down to put together this service – and to the hundreds of people who have written emails and cards of sympathy.

*Darest thou now O soul,
Walk out with me toward the unknown region,
Where neither ground is for the feet nor any path to follow?*

Walt Whitman

Robbie, may you travel safely in that 'unknown region'. All my love, my darling – I'll miss you more than words can say.

Sarah



Rosslyn Hill Chapel
Hampstead
London NW3
Thursday 17th December 2009