

The Magician

in memoriam Martin Wynford Smith

because you have borne your dark name through all these slow years my old friend
I praise your solemn thoughts your raging evenings
your seducer's voice and your young man's shoes
the lover's heart which tolled within you like a leaden bell
your wintry soul full of storms and secrets

because you have borne your reckless dreams down the torrent of the years my brother
I honour the delicacy of our shared art
the perfumed skin of our lovers
the hours you sat drinking beside me as we baptised the night with our philosophy
(I will drink only water now in your memory)

because you have borne your grey burden through the many-coloured years my lost friend
I remember the mournful breath of your rooms full of guitars and bottles
the weeping women you brought to me among the candlelit trees
the journeys we never took through deserts or forests or distant yellow cities
and your long last silence as you were scraped raw by the nails of your old girlfriend death

still for me now the wicked ghosts of our past years
as you were never able to still your own
they grin and gibber at us like clowns
they are like old sailors' tales
full of unreal creatures and the smell of the wide impossible sea

take them with you as they burn your ruined body into ash
the body of a lover
of a sage
of a magician
of a black prince

Ian A Ferguson May 2008