

LANDSCAPES: FOR MARIE- ANNE

two poems from a landscape which is a sister to the trees of Brugge

I begin with a lake which not even the exile of one swan has made impure

Or find you in that dream inscape begot by Hildegard's daughters where earth supplants heaven and claims its trees and fruits and roots

Or find you in another in which, to commemorate the dead, you have planted a tree from which I'd shake the residue of sorrow

Then return to that lake I expect the hands of a woman to rise from and return to the world the lost song of its joy

And I could go on naming such landscapes of your soul but there is no need for you are here

Not there, no never, not far away

But here, near, now.

Entering this garden I can believe that Eden once existed

Not as some luxuriant forethought to creation

But as the first pleasure of a deity

Who wanted the simplicity of rhododendrons to bring him joy.

Him? Who's to say what sex the godhead has

Or having one no doubt longs for the other

And so, from itself, created its best creation

So that now his exile is more painful than ours

Then let us send prophets and messengers

To offer the comfort of knowing

The garden remains as it was left

Where the shadows that move are human, not divine,

And have no wish to be otherwise.

Martin Burke, ten Ede, 17 April, 2011