

From Poems from Dylan's Wales

John Edwin Cowen

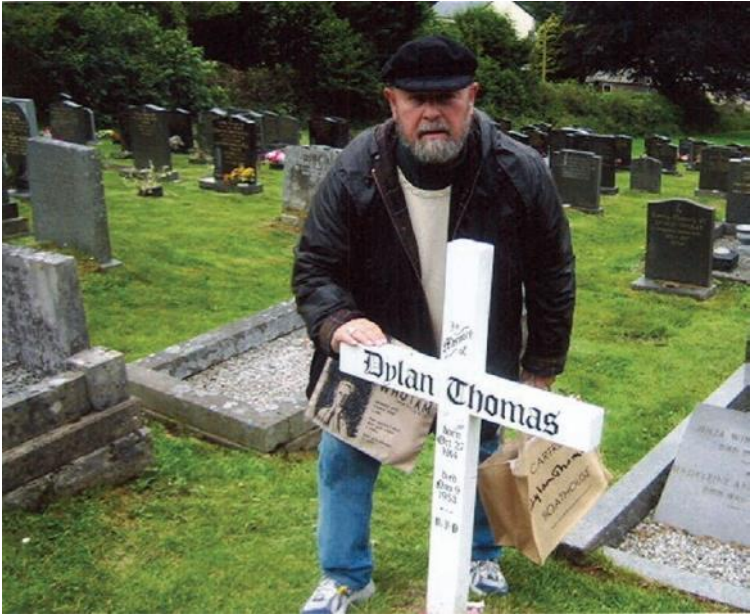
THE DAY I FELL ON DYLAN THOMAS'S GRAVE

To: poets John Brantingham and T. Anders Carson, who picked me up and walked me back up to Dylan's graveside

Once below a time, Jack
 Not so nimble went
Up the hill to fall
 Upon Dylan's and Caitlin's
Grave:—not so much
To fall as to Roll
 Down Laugharne
Cemetery's steep incline
 Until a kind-dead-chap let
Me land on his lap-of-stone.

Once upon a time, I fell
 on Dylan's grave :—
Upon his sea-drift songs
 Of his apple green youth
and mine. And, now, I, too, lay, me

Down, perhaps to dream,
Perhaps to sleep, but more
 Content shall I now keep . . .
Until I hear October's
 Raven:—cough up sticks.



DYLAN THOMAS'S LAST READING IN WALES

A Greek Chorus Soloist Reads:

:— wind, hair, fire: seagull
bird songs, spring time, shrieks
he talks—warbles, sparkles
marks his trees : women prowl

:— children's vowels, fill Tenby Castle
consonants, verbs, words hit the beach
low notes, roots and vines climb up—
castle towers, towers of clinging verbs

:— sea notes, sea songs, sea-shaken lyrics
does the water speak? do rocks?
a morning cock crows, *Rockaroo-karoo*
worms, snails, snakes, hissing sounds

:— do birds curse? *shitwhoo—shitwhoo*
wind, hair, fire: raven
do fish sing? do mermaids, whales
porpoise:—sing mournful poems?

:— mice, unicorns, clowns perform
flowers perped on tongues in ears
float in brains-ale drowned by hosts
wind, fire, earth: dust, dust.

STONES AND POEMS

for Peter Thabit Jones

Like people
stones are different:—
each stone a thumb-
print from God
often layered one
upon another
like words in
a poem or poems
that roll gently
down hill or quietly
down Kilvey Hill,
where a gentle
poet from the ugly
side of Swansea
(not Dylan's side)
:—builds poems
like stone fences
so steady, they'll
last forever . . .

HERON CROSSING

A tall great blue
heron, proud and
tall

camouflaged by
grey street pave-
ment,

(might, have been
the casualty of
A

Swansea taxi—but
for its awkward,
not

quite posthumous
Houdini get-a-
way(((

A LITTLE...

a little
boy
chases a
yellow
butterfly
with
net in hand
eluding
him like a
poet's
poem can

I KNOW THE MAN

I know the man in autumn
born of the summer sun
awaits the winter's frost
and spring's first accost
to spill from April's daffodils
yellow and golden and green

I know the man in winter
alive at the sound of poetry
alive to cast off and sail the sea
hear moonrift Swansea tales
adrift in waves hiding whales
as moonlight's compass seizes

I know the man in summer
heated by harpoon waters
subtracted by math and weather
wrapped in skeins of living matter
where humid kisses live all night
in moonlight by the bay's retreat

I know the man in springtime
sweetened by the scent of sex
blossomed as the pulse retracts
re-enters the slipping purse
of love: tosses and swerves
until sunrise rides winter's hearse.

—*Fairleigh Dickinson University, Teaneck, NJ*