



Thoughts, Poems and Reflections in a Time of Pandemic. Number 3: Elastoplast Eyes

At the present time the news is dominated by two things, the rapidly increasing number of deaths from the Corona Virus Pandemic and the disruption it creates. The social isolation forces us in on ourselves and makes us face up to our personal thoughts, fears, and challenges that we might otherwise have hidden away. In these "*Thoughts, Poems and Reflections in a time of Pandemic*". I describe some of these, and how through facing them we may find fulfilment in the lives we seek.

This poem, "*Elastoplast Eyes*" is about a homeless woman who used to frequent the pews of a London church, St Martin-in-the-Fields in Trafalgar Square. Sitting quietly in a corner she would often go unnoticed and by taping her glasses with Elastoplast to form narrow slits to see through, she was trying to hide from the world. Like the previous poem "*Is There Anyone There?*", this is a poem about hiding the inner self. The poem also tells of what we do to her through our own actions, and how our own refusals to see, can have such a destructive effect.

ELASTOPLAST EYES

So what are the pressures that lead her to bind?
Her life to a world which two cuts have defined
By glasses so taped that its scope is surveyed
From the slits in elastoplast eyes.

Is she someone to pity or someone to fear?
What past and what future is hers to declare?
Her vengeance sought by an anger made clear
In the hurt of elastoplast eyes.

Then who is the child, which is hidden inside?
With the hopes and ideals the world has defiled
She says she's a duchess; we laugh at the thought
When we look at elastoplast eyes.

And what is the cause of the bitterness brought?
Is it hardship or misuse that mankind has wrought?
Which captures her world with a fortune defined
In the mask of elastoplast eyes.

Or could this be someone who's tried to believe?
In a goodness too great for the mind to conceive
Brought low by the values she never could keep
To her world of elastoplast eyes.

Do we notice her fear as we try to walk by?
When we try not to see her or hear anger's cry
As we quicken our step and look towards the sky
To escape from elastoplast eyes.

Then what of the hurt our rejection creates?
Or the way she will hide from the pain it instates?
By concealing herself from the world and her fate
With the veil of elastoplast eyes.

So, however disturbed in thought or in mind
Should we treat her like trash in the gutter we find
We'll smash all her hopes by the actions we take
When our brains have elastoplast eyes.

24 Sept 2002

REFLECTION

As far as I am aware, this woman was the matron for a hospital which was bombed in wartime and who was so traumatised that she could no longer sleep inside. Whatever the cause, she like all of us, can have many burdens to bear. In the teaching of the Buddha, it is said that: "*Life is a person's dearest possession, but when that person is confronted with insuperable difficulties and unbearable burdens, very life becomes an intolerable burden*".

The Buddha also said: "*Radiate boundless love towards the entire world*" and "*Love is a gift of one's inner most soul to another so both can be whole.*" Healing is not just about providing food and lodgings for the homeless, it is about covering and surrounding all such people with love.

In my view a religion which enfolds all people in the Gospel of love can create the greatest good in the world. However, a religion which excludes anyone or any group from full inclusion and the message of universal love does the opposite, and it can create the greatest evil instead. Sadly, there are too many religious groups and people who use their own doctrines to reinforce tribal identities which act to exclude others of different races, ethnicities, social groups, and sexual and gender identities, throughout the world today.

We ask or pray according to our own beliefs for all the homeless and dispossessed, stateless people, asylum seekers, and refugees, those who go hungry and those without any support, people suffering from mental trauma, people made invisible are regarded as non-entities by ourselves, countries and states. Open our eyes to the hurt and rejection our thoughts and actions may create. Remember all people in refugee camps and resettlement places all over the world. In London, and all over the United Kingdom, remember the homeless who in this time of lockdown are now desperate for water to drink as well as food.

The complete collection of reflections is available at: www.com.tqdr.co.uk/articles/001C-PandemicThoughts.pdf.