

POEM OF THE WEEK

THE PLURAL OF FAMILY

The plural of "family" is "families"
As we advance through time we acquire more
("families"); by the time we turn 70
We can count them

My experience of "family" and "families"
Is best unremembered; for them
as much as for myself. Let's just say
"We didn't sync" (as in synchronise)

I cling to the myth of a loving family
I tried to create it when it became my turn
With my having no clue how to from my childhood
I floundered, and fumbled; I failed.

As I'm talking to myself, I can admit this
I lament that which was not
Feel angry at it not being so
Feel stupid for feeling angry

I did not know the world my parents lived in
How they related to their parents
How that affected the family
I have no understanding

I am reasonably intelligent, emotionally
Intellectually and socially. I can understand.
I lack the information. The plural of "family"
Is "families". You might get one opportunity

of happiness; or be fortunate in having
Loving relationships. Is it a toss of a dice
One drink too many, a trick of mind
Done with mirrors? A masquerade

Within a masquerade (how can that be?)
That which we term "family" is that. It's not
what we choose (if we could); it's what
we're given (can that be forgiven?)

People are people (faults and all)
They aren't shape-changers (try they might)
They are dressed in shades of darkness and light
They are dressed according to our sight

Take your good/evil dualism; shove it down the latrine

Acceptance or forgiveness is not the easiest of options
It doesn't come in Weetbix packets or as a McDonald's toy
It is, after the anger, the rage has been worked through
And processed, the only thing left. A dull, empty feeling

Hello, my father, my mother (and your mothers and fathers)
I knew thee not, I was too young and lacked experience
When you made me angry, I let you know as babies do
As I grew older, I hid that anger ("Not acceptable behaviour")

Anger, fed by frustration and anger, grows to bitter

left in memory, a dull, grey emptiness
(have I mentioned that before?)
A poisonous void. Not quite, Shreds
Of anger, stubbornly avoiding the light

Goads us to continue the fight, to act as adults
To embrace what is, place what was in its context
And prepare for what can be; to be what we can be
And remember those of long ago with fondness

Isn't that what we would ask our children to do?

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