

SECRET WORLDS

By Graham Masterton

But while you carry out your daily chores
Shopping; or chatting; or chopping onions;
or scrolling on your phones
We two go travelling, in secret
To worlds that you may never know exist.

Ordinary, some of them, these worlds, and drab
With rundown terraced houses; and blistered plane trees
And wheelie bins lined up behind their walls.

Yet others where a cyan sea rolls in
On salt-white sands; and where the stars
Sparkle all night like shattered glass.
Where lilac blooms in darkness; and funerals are held
And grey cats stare from windowsills with yellow eyes.

When we arrive in those worlds, calm and sure
Like two professors walking into school
People still speak in shadow-language:
Lovingly sometimes, cooing like pigeons; sometimes spraying spit with spite.
But meaningless. And they have seen themselves
Only as blurred reflections in a passing car, or a stagnant pond.

When we arrive, we teach them sentences to speak,
Or when to hold their tongues.
We dress them, men and women, and we hold a mirror up
So they can clearly see their faces, faultless or grotesque,
And understand the world in which they live, this secret world
With skies, and ragged clouds, and winds that you will never feel

Unless, that is, we choose to write
and tell you what these worlds are like:
Their hills, their gloomy forests and their rippling fields
And introduce who lives there:
Warm-hearted, hostile, passionate or cold
Hopeful or grieving; or bewildered; or alone.

Otherwise, those worlds stay secret, in our minds
Until we widen our horizons and make other worlds
Further, stranger, but even more believable
And those worlds are forgotten, still unknown.

Copyright Graham Masterton, 2020