

When you are old.....

Will you remember the sharp sting of apprehension as you turn, now, to face the world? Will you recall the faces of those around you; the minds that shaped you; the hearts that marked you? No matter. Whatever is lost or saved, each encounter has made you. Like a river carved by the biting of small pebbles and the soft persistent flow.

The clock is paused. Time hovers. A rare moment to reflect on the future. You have drunk the words, inhaled the ideas, learnt what you needed; some less, some more so. But the instinct is there.

Today you are cast adrift. Untethered from the ropes that moored you in this place. The waters rush and swirl or slow, thick as mud. Perhaps you will float, content to follow in the general direction? But then the tides surge and you are swept away, cheated of your course and swollen by the fear. In panic, you flail, hopes heavy as lead.

It is then that you remember how to swim; the automatic reflexes connecting. You kick out, frightened and elated, heart beating against the current. You remember what it is to twist and turn; to feel the heat of the sun on your eyelids and the cold of the rocks beneath your ribs. All you have learnt and more.

Young rivers flow quick and fast, desperate to find the sea. Days rush into months and years. Limbs ache and muscles are torn. The lights of strange cities flash by. Hot greasy smells and splashes of laughter. All life proceeds. Painful and sharp, like misshapen stones.

The river grows heavy. Waters thickened by the rocks and pebbles gathered on the way. As it nears the sea, the current slows, tired now. The rough assortment settles to the mud, like memories. Vivid snatches snared in the depths; where the most jagged stones are often the most beautiful of all.

Each life will carve a channel: some deep, some shallow. The river understands that to succeed is to learn: to adapt and adjust, be diverted but persist. But then the river always knew that the course was less important than the flowing of the waters and the pebbles gathered on the way.

When you are old and grey and nodding by the fire, will you remember how the waters felt, and smile at the colours running through your story?