

FOR DONALD REEVES

Poem composed by Kathleen Raine for Donald's leaving St James's

*Dear Donald, casting our minds back, memories
And imagination, truest of records,
We bring, each of us, what we have at heart
Here and now together at St James's.*

*The last time comes, never as expected
Bringing full circle to completion the beginning:
You stood, raising in your hand the staff of office
And broke it in the name of William Blake,
Poet of this church, and of all London's sons and daughters.*

*With marks of weakness, marks of woe, he found us,
But you have taught us that in love there are no disbelievers,
Sceptic, drop-outs, cold perfectionists, our ordinary faces
Made beautiful and dear to one another
By unjudgmental love received and given.*

*I remember the day when we read in relay
The complete poems of Blake, remember
Concerts, poetry-reading, Tarkovsky who filmed the sacred vision,
Michael Horovitz blowing the ram's horn of Judah,
The High Commissioner of India planting in Blake's honour
The mulberry tree beside the Wren Café.*

*Here Trevor Huddleston found sanctuary
In his great battle for the soul of Africa,
Peter Pelz painted in triptych the transfiguration
Of our shabby world into the New Jerusalem,
Remember the Hare Krishna people serving curry and cups of tea,
The Findhorn people dancing.*

*And always, day and night, there would be someone
To listen to London's lost despairing night-wanderers
Bringing their hopelessness hoping for hope.
Here the hopeless from the winter cold found shelter.*

*Between Piccadilly and Jermyn Street
St James's has been our Ark, riding the flood of our times and places
And now as end and beginning meet full circle
All within that mandala is for ever, is Now, is timeless.
And what you have given us, Donald, is ours, and London's, always.*

Kathleen Raine